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ROBERT BURNS

English and American Literature

A COURSE OF STUDY IN LITERARY INTERPRE-
TATION AND HISTORY, WITH APPLIED
METHODS OF TEACHING READ-
ING AND LITERATURE

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STATE NORMAL SCHOOL AT STEVENS POINT, WISCONSIN

Including Numerous Masterpieces

VOLUME IV, LYRIC POETRY



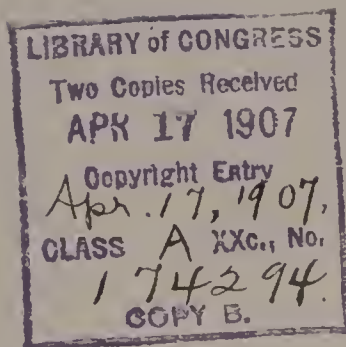
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Lyric Poetry

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**Studies in Structure and
Interpretation**

The Structure of Poetry

METER

If one reads poetry aloud he soon becomes sensible of a certain rhythm or regular recurrence of accented syllables that gives a measured movement to the lines. It is a recognition of this rhythm that makes a child read in a "sing-song" tone, as natural a thing as it is to sing. If we hear constantly repeated at frequent and regular intervals any noise there is a tendency to group these separate sounds and measure them off regularly. The clock ticks with always the same force and with the same space of time between the ticks, yet we hear *tick-tack*, *tick-tack*; we can prove the difference to be in our ear for it requires but little effort to hear *tick-tack*, *tick-tack* or *tack-tick*, *tack-tick*. The ticking has not varied in the least.

The poet takes advantage of this rhythmical tendency of nature and by using accented syllables at regular intervals compels us to recognize the swing of his lines. When he reduces this to a system he has established the *meter* of his production. The poetical accents sometimes fall on unaccented syllables and sometimes on monosyllabic words that are not emphatic but usually the metrical accent of any given word corresponds to its logical accent. The accentuation of a syllable tends to lengthen the time used in the pronuncia-

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tion of that syllable, and so we call it long though the sound of its vowel may be short. Short syllables are those which bear no accent even though the vowel has the long sound. The meter of a line may be indicated by placing accent marks in their proper places, or it may be shown, as is more frequently the case, by the same characters used to designate long and short vowel sounds. For instance in the line from Bryant,

 The stormy month of March is come at last,

the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth syllables are accented, that is, are long, though it will be seen at once that the vowels in *month*, *come*, and *last*, are all short sounds. The meter might with equal propriety be shown thus:

The stor'my month' of March' is come' at last'.

These accents are seen to divide the line into five sections which we may indicate in this manner:

The stōr | m'y mōnth | ōf Mārch | īs cōme | āt lāst.

Each one of these divisions called a *foot*, contains one unaccented syllable and one accented syllable that marks the division and gives distinction to the foot.

The line just studied has five feet. But lines vary in length, some containing but one accent and others having many. The meter of a line is de-

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terminated by the number and character of its feet. The names of these feet are compounds of the Greek numerals and the word meter.

One foot is mono+meter=monom'eter.

Two feet make di+meter=dim'eter.

Three feet “ tri+meter=trim'eter.

Four feet “ tetra+meter=tetram'eter.

Five feet “ penta+meter=pentam'eter.

Six feet “ hexa+meter=hexam'eter.

Seven feet “ hepta+meter=heptam'eter.

Eight feet “ octa+meter=octam'eter.

Technically a *verse* is a line of poetry, and the group of lines to which is frequently given that name should be called a *stanza*, the different types of which will be discussed later.

But all verses are not like the one just read. Here are two from Longfellow :

Trust no future, howe'er pleasant.

Art is long and time is fleeting.

When read aloud, it will be seen at once that the first, third, fifth, and seventh syllables are accented and the metrical reading will be represented in this manner :

Trust nō fū tūre hōw e'er pleas ānt.

Art is lōng and time is fleet īng.

These two verses are tetrameter, while the first was pentameter. But in the first example the second syllable of each foot was accented and the foot is called an *iambus* (adjective form, *iambic*).

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In the second and third examples the first syllable in each foot was accented and the foot is known as a *troche* (tro'kee): adjective form, *trochaic* (tro ka'ic). In naming the meter of a verse we always mention the name of a foot and the number of feet in the verse. Accordingly, our first example is a verse of *iambic pentameter* and the second and third are *trochaic tetrameter*.

It will be seen that in each of the given examples the accented syllables alternate with those that are not accented and that each foot is disyllabic, that is, it contains two syllables only. This line shows a different arrangement:

Lightly our boat is now gliding along.

The verse naturally lends itself to rapid reading and has a smoother and more flowing movement than either of the others. Divided into feet with accents marked it appears :

Lightly ōr | bōat īs nōw | glīdīng ā | lōng.

There are three syllables in each foot and the first always bears the accent. These feet are *dactyls* and the verse is *dactylic trimeter* with an added long syllable. The other verses we have quoted have been *acatalectic*, that is, they have had an exact number of feet. This is *catalectic* because of the added foot.

Frequently we find a verse like the following :
I have read | in an old | and a mar | velous tale,
where each foot is of three syllables and the third

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has the accent. These feet are *anapests* and the verse quoted is *anapestic tetrameter*.

These four types of poetic feet are the common ones in English and the only ones with which a person is frequently called upon to deal. The one by far the most common is the iambic. The anapestic foot is usually combined in the same line with others. Occasionally we seem to find a foot of two long syllables, which is known as a *spondee*, and sometimes the syllables seem to arrange themselves in groups of three and the middle one bears the accent. This foot is known as the *amphibrach*. When a line is read with a slight pause at the end of each foot it is said to be *scanned*. Scanning is pleasant to the ear when it is not marked by too heavy accents nor too long pauses.

Coleridge has woven together some curious lines which show in themselves the different meters described.

Trochee trips from long to short;
From long to short in solemn sort
Slow spondee stalks; strong foot! yet ill able
Ever to come up with dactyl trisyllable.

Iambics march from short to long;
With a leap and a bound, the swift anapests
throng;
One syllable long with one short at each side,
Amphibrachys hastes with a stately stride.

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It often happens that one foot is substituted for another, and when the meter is thus mixed the name of the prevalent foot is given to the verse. This departure from the regular plan gives a pleasing variety. When a verse is long a pause is made in reading, near the middle of the line. This sometimes divides a foot and then the pause is called a *cæsura*.

It is | a sul | try day | || ; the sun | has drunk
The dew | || that lay | upon | the morn | ing
grass ;
There is | no rust | ling || in | the lof | ty elm
That can | opies | my dwell | ing, || and | its
shade
Scarce cools | me.

—*Bryant.*

The pauses in the above lines are marked by parallel lines. There is a *cæsura* in the third line, as the pause occurs between *ling*, the first syllable, and *in*, the second syllable, of the third foot. Another *cæsura* will be noticed in the fourth line.

Summary.

Dissyllabic feet :

Iambus, second syllable accented, \cup — :

A mother is a mother still
The holiest thing alive.

—*Coleridge.*

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From yon blue heavens above us bent
The gardner Adam and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.

—*Tennyson.*

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow-falls in the river,
A moment white — then melt forever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.

—*Burns.*

Trochee, first syllable accented, — ∪ :

He is dead, the great musician.
He has moved a little nearer
To the Master of all music.

—*Longfellow.*

Soldier, rest ! thy warfare o'er
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

—*Scott.*

Spondee, both syllables accented, — — :

I am the God Thor
I am the War God.

—*Longfellow.*

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Trisyllabic Feet:

Anapest, last syllable accented, $\cup \cup \text{—}$:

And the night shall be filled with music
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

—*Longfellow.*

May I govern my passions with absolute sway,
And grow wiser and better as my strength wears
away.

—*Walter Pope.*

Dactyl, first syllable accented, $\text{—} \cup \cup$:

Come as the winds come, when
Forests are rended;
Come as the waves come, when
Navies are stranded.
Faster come, faster come,
Faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page and groom,
Tenant and Master.

—*Scott.*

NOTE.—Southey in 1796 tried to express in dactylic measure the sorrows and miseries of war in a little poem of four stanzas of which here are the first and last:

THE SOLDIER'S WIFE.

Weary way-wanderer, languid and sick at heart,
Traveling painfully over the rugged road,

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Wild-visaged wanderer! ah! for thy heavy
chance!

Thy husband will never return from the war
again,
Cold is thy hopeless heart, even as Charity!—
Cold are thy famished babes. God help thee,
widowed one!

Gifford ridiculed it in a parody from which we
quote the corresponding stanzas:

QUINTESSENCE OF ALL THE DACTYLICS.

Wearisome sonneteer, feeble and querulous,
Painfully dragging out thy demo-cratic lays—
Moon-stricken sonneteer, “ah! for thy heavy
chance!”

Ne’er talk of ears again! look at thy spelling
book;
Dilworth and Dyche are both mad at thy quanti-
ties—
Dactyls, call’st thou ’em? “God help thee,
silly one!”

Amphibrach, middle syllable accented, ∪ — ∪;
O hush, thee, my babie, thy sire was a knight,
Thy mother a lady both lovely and bright;
The woods and the glens, from the towers which
we see,
They all are belonging, dear babie, to thee.

Oho ro i ri ri, cadulgu lo

Oho ro i ri ri cadulgu lo.

—*Scott.*

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Although it is well to become thoroughly acquainted with the essential principles governing metrical composition and to look closely for the application of these principles in the poetry that one studies, yet the student must continually make allowance for the poet's individuality, expressed in such application. Mastery of the poetic art depends largely upon ability to secure unity in variety; that is, to modify the meter as the thought and sentiment and the poet's esthetic judgment may dictate, and yet to produce an entirely harmonious effect. Hence, the reader must not look for a uniform grouping of syllables.

The scansion of poetry in accordance with the length and accentuation naturally given to syllables in reading them, is to-day replacing the old method of rigid division of verses into regularly constructed feet,—a mechanical method that disregards the poet's thought and the music of his lines. The student will do well to observe closely the length that should be given to each syllable in an intelligent reading of a stanza, and the disposition that should be made of the accents by which certain syllables are distinguished. Then let him indicate, with the proper marks, the results of his observation, and thus determine the prevalent kind of foot and length of line. Sometimes it is necessary to read a stanza several times, or to examine carefully more than one stanza in a poem before one can classify the meter.

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RHYME.

Verse appeals to the ear by its melodious combinations of sounds and also by the regular recurrence of similar sounds in *rhymes*. These usually occur at the ends of verses. In order that a rhyme may be perfect the two rhyming syllables must both be accented, the vowel sound and the consonants following must be identical and the sounds preceding the vowel must be different. For example, *fate* and *late* rhyme; *fat* and *late* do not; *fate* and *lame* do not; *debate* rhymes with *relate*, but not with *prelate*. Double rhymes occur frequently, as in the words *bowlders*, *shoulders*.

Take this stanza from Hood's *Song of the Shirt*:

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch ! Stitch ! Stitch !
In poverty hunger and dirt;
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the “song of the shirt.”

Here the first and third lines are unrhymed, the second and fourth, the fifth and seventh, and the sixth and eighth lines rhyme alternately in couplets. If the beginnings of the verses are noticed it will be seen that the indentations of the

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lines correspond with the rhymes. If *a* represent the rhyming syllable in the first line, *b* in the second, and *c* in the third, then *b* will represent the fourth, *d* the fifth, *e* the sixth, *d* the seventh, and *e* the eighth. The whole rhyme scheme of the stanza then may be represented by *abcbbdede*. Where the rhymes are in couplets the scheme is *aabbcc* etc.; where regularly alternate, *ababcbcd* etc.; occasionally, as in some of the sonnets, the rhyme scheme is complicated and must be followed rigidly. Holmes's *Chambered Nautilus* shows a peculiar plan, *aabbbbcc*.

Rhymes are not always used in poetry. Most of Shakespeare's plays are written in *blank verse* which is unrhymed iambic pentameter, called *heroic verse*. *Hiawatha* and *Evangeline* are not rhymed, the former being trochaic tetrameter and the latter largely dactylic hexameter.

Frequently appeal is made to the ear by a similarity of sound at the beginning of words. This is known as *alliteration*. In early English poems this was of prime importance and subject to rigid rules, but more recently it has been used without rule, subject merely to the author's will. This is seen to a marked degree in many writers. Here are several lines taken from Poe's *The Bells*:

What a world of merriment their melody foretells.
What a tale of terror now their turbulency tells.
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic
fire.

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In many cases alliteration is very skillfully handled, as where Whittier uses the liquid consonants to make more smooth and harmonious to the ear, the line that tells the friendliness of the brooklet whose murmurings could not be heard in winter, but

“The music of whose liquid lip
Had been to us companionship”

during the long summer days.

The number of verses in a stanza varies from two to an indefinite number. When there are two verses the stanza is called a couplet; a three line stanza is called a tercet; a four line stanza, a quatrain. The five line stanza is not common but six is a frequent number.

There are several special forms of stanzas which are met with in greater or less degrees of frequency. The *rhyme royal* is a seven line stanza composed of an ordinary quatrain and three additional lines rhyming *ababbcc*. The *ottava rima* has been a favorite with Italian and Spanish poets, and is not infrequently found in English. It consists of eight iambic pentameter verses rhyming as follows, *abababcc*.

The *Spenserian stanza* consists of eight iambic pentameter lines, followed by an *Alexandrine* (iambic hexameter). The rhyme scheme of the pentameters may vary but the plan is usually *ababbcbcc*.

Studies

Find the meter of the poems of this number. Note variations from regularity and see if they are a pleasing relief from monotony. When the meter is difficult or greatly varied do not depend upon the first few lines but read many lines and so determine the prevalent foot. By going back it is then possible to recognize the liberties the poet has taken with various established meters. Scan the poems until the characteristic flow of the verse becomes familiar to you and you can distinguish without an analysis the lilt of the trochee from the slow motion of the iambus. If one has a good ear he soon acquires this power and the music of the poem adds to his pleasure. Classify the poems on the basis of their meter and then rank the meters in the order of their frequency. These selections will not give an accurate estimate for the language, because some effort was made to secure examples of the more infrequent types.

Determine the rhyme scheme for each poem. Do not spare the pains necessary to write the formulæ until you notice without conscious attention the manner of rhyming. Compare different stanzas of the same poem to determine if the scheme is identical throughout. When it is varied, try to determine the reason for the change. Do you think the author made the change because he

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felt it to be advantageous or was he forced to do it by lack of proper words? Do you find some rhymes that appear to be imperfect, some that are false or altogether inadmissible? Is the rhyme always confined to one syllable or are there examples of two or more rhyming syllables? Can you find any examples of rhymes occurring persistently near the middle of the lines? If you find these, can the lines be broken in two without loss to the poem?

Find examples of alliteration and see whether they add to the beauty of the poem. Can you find words which seem to have been used because of their own melodious character? Can you find words so placed that they are brought together in melodious succession? Can you find examples of single words which by their sound suggest the idea they convey, as *buzzing* suggests the angry whirring of the bee's wings, and *hum*, the soft tones of the homeward flight of the weary worker? Can you find examples of this harmony in groups of words as in the oft-quoted laborious line,—
“Up a high hill he heaves a huge round stone?”
Much of the beauty of the poetry lies in its melody and in its harmony or pleasing succession of sounds and in the perfect adaptation of sounds to sense. One learns to feel the thrill of these exquisite tones by training himself to detect them and acquiring the habit of unconscious response to their sweet influence.

Studies

Do you find anywhere words repeated with regularity and phrases repeated in words but slightly varying? Is this a pleasing thing? Find in some poems a line or more repeated at the end of every stanza. This refrain is another effort to charm the ear by repetition of agreeable sounds, though it is sometimes a recurrent thought that adds to the beauty of sentiment.

The study of versification is an interesting one but the average reader cannot give it the time needed for a thorough mastery of its laws. He must, however, if he expects to appreciate poetry, know thoroughly the common forms of meter; not know them merely as names, but as realities. The movement of the lines must seize his imagination the moment he sees them. If you have reached this point in your study without recognizing the spirit of the four principal meters, review your work and practice the scansion of a great variety of poems. The music of the lines will come to you with practice.

The Interpretation of Poetry

The author of *Rab and His Friends* has aptly said: "It is with poetry as with flowers and fruits. We would all rather have them and taste them than talk about them. It is a good thing to know about a lily, its scientific ins and outs, its botany, its archæology, even its anatomy and organic radicals; but it is a better thing to look at the flowers themselves and to consider how they grow."

Professor Shairp writes: "Whenever the soul comes vividly in contact with any fact, truth, or existence, which it realizes and takes home to itself with more than common intensity, out of that meeting of the soul and its object there arises a thrill of joy, a glow of emotion; and the expression of that *glow*, that *thrill*, is poetry."

The Daffodils

At one time Wordsworth, wandering in the beautiful region in which he made his home, came vividly in contact with a fact, his soul realized with more than ordinary intensity the meaning of the fact, and thrilling with the experience he gave expression to the glow of feeling:

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky-way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee.
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company;

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I gazed and gazed, but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

One is not to suppose that the poet deliberately decided that he would use iambic tetrameter verse, that the rhymes should alternate through four verses, that the stanza should close with a rhyming couplet and that he then set about to find words necessary to fill his meters and fix his rhymes. Though Poe tells us this is the way he constructed *The Raven* yet we feel that there is something more than mere mechanical ability in the little poem we are considering. By some wonderful power not unlike, though vastly more refined than, the one by which we learn to recognize the rhythm of the poem, Wordsworth's soul found expression for his emotion in the perfect harmony of verse. Words, phrases and sentences dropped into place, verses assumed the right length, rhymes sprang into being, graceful figures took new life, and the poem was created, complete, beautiful.

He is lonely as a cloud on a bright day in

The Daffodils

spring, a cloud floating far above the rugged crest of his mighty Helvellyn; he knows the absolute loneliness of genius which neither friend nor relative can assuage. Then all at once the daffodils burst upon his vision. How willingly would he make us see them as he sees them there by the lake shore in a long line underneath the trees, ten thousand of them at once dancing in a glee that outdoes the sparkling waves. His loneliness departs—what poet could be other than gay in such a jocund company? How clearly the picture comes to us of the pensive poet, stooping joyfully and laughing in unison with the merriment of the golden flowers that twinkled in such multitudes about him. There is the picture. But what remains in the poem?—The lesson, the deep thought that more than power of expression a thousand-fold, makes Wordsworth the poet!

“They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude.”

That inward eye, that power of recollection, that marvelous gift which enables one to bring up vividly the scenes of the past and create again in the present the joys of other days! The daffodils teach him again the great lesson, the sustaining power, the inspiring influence of the beautiful in nature. It is the beauty of the flowers that charms away his loneliness; it is the recollection of that beauty that again and again fills his heart

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with pleasure: it is the beauty of the lines and the unity and harmony of the lyric that excite our admiration and give to our vacant and pensive moods some of the same joy that filled his breast when the daffodils first tossed their sprightly heads.

And here a poet is always at his best for beauty is his own particular domain. The true poet searches for it, lives in it, and breathes it forth in inspired lines to charm away the cares of his hearers. His special faculty is the imagination, by which he gives to his utterances the force and vividness that move the world and by which he transmits the products of his intellect into food for emotions. By it he seizes the little incidents of daily life and combines them in harmonious wholes or separates and rearranges the elements of his thought, ever bringing them forth in more artistic arrangement, and stirring the emotions to greater depths. True poetry springs from the heart and deals with one's relations to humanity, to the world, to the infinite. It appeals to the best that is in man and stirs him to nobler resolves and higher achievements!

To quote once more from Professor Shairp: "To appeal to the higher side of human nature, and to strengthen it, to come to its rescue when it is overborne by worldliness and material interests, to support it by great truths set forth in their most attractive form—this is the only worthy aim, the adequate end, of all poetic endeavor."

The Rainy Day

Longfellow sees the great truth that sorrow and disappointment must come to everyone but that happiness follows in their steps; that it is useless to repine for the common fate of mankind. With the greatest skill he sets forth this truth in the most attractive form. He assumes a day cold and dark and dreary with rain falling and wind blowing dismally: the scene is in harmony with the day for there is only the moldering wall, ivy-covered, desolate, with the dead leaves falling continually around it. Misery and despair are typified by this melancholy picture. But this is not sufficient. Hopelessness must be further intensified by reference to the poet's life which like the day is dark and dreary; his past moldering and broken like the wall, ivy-covered, desolate, with the hopes of his youth falling unrealized. Rhythm aided by the choice of words appropriate in sound and vivid in coloring stirs the emotions sympathetically and the reader's heart is touched with sadness. Longfellow has created the atmosphere he wished, has prepared the mind for the truth he knows and would inculcate. It is by a personal admonition that he does this, an admonition to himself, to his own heart so that no trace of didactic purpose may appear even in the figur-

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ative general truth with which he closes the last stanza.

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
The vine still clings to the moldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
 And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the moldering Past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
 And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
 Some days must be dark and dreary.

Crossing the Bar

With a long life drawing well toward its close, a life of study and quiet meditation, a life into which sorrow had come and in which faith had followed doubt, Tennyson, mindful of the loved ones whom he must soon leave behind, writes his message. It comes from a heart touched and softened by experience and so full of tenderness and love that his sentiment is universal. His faith is as broad as the human race and years will not affect it. Wherever old age has come or death approaches with certain and hastening steps, *Crossing the Bar* expresses the dearest hope, the sublimest trust. This is poetry, this beautiful heartfelt expression of universal sentiment.

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me.
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the
boundless deep
Turns again home.

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Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark.
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of time
and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

Evening approaches, the sun is setting, the shadows lengthening, and the evening star, first harbinger of night, appears in the darkening heavens. The call comes clear and distinct, the call to home and to friends who have preceded in the fateful voyage. Opposite the mouth of the harbor lies the bar over whose surface the shallow waters moan fatefully when a storm approaches. How significant this! May there be no intimation of baffling winds and breaking waves, of storm and shipwreck, when I put forth alone upon my last voyage.

On the contrary, may the tide move softly in, so deep and full that the treacherous sands of the bar may be covered too deeply to fret the surface of the water, so smoothly that they may be crossed without an intimation of their presence. When I turn home again may death have no terrors for me.

Crossing the Bar

Now twilight grows deeper, the evening bell sounds and the lights go out one by one and darkness falls as the bar is crossed. Death and darkness and farewell! But may there be no sadness in this farewell; the bar moans not, the evening star is full of hope.

The journey may be long into that region where time and space limit not, the flood may bear me on with resistless energy but when I have crossed the bar I hope, I know, I shall see face to face my Pilot, my Lord.

Poetry has something of the divine in it and the best of poetry is religious in the deepest and rarest sense of the word. It is not denominational, in no sense sectarian; but as the Christian religion conserves the highest and best interests of man so Christian poetry has been the highest and the best, its lessons the most inspiring, its spirit the most sublime. English poetry, more than that of any other nation, is characterized by deep reverence and by enduring faith in divine justice and mercy.

Battle Hymn of the Republic

English national hymns have been characterized by this same devout spirit, whether sung in the grandeur of righteous wrath, like our own *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, or breathing a warning against self-confidence and national pride as does the *Recessional*. Patriotism is in itself an inspiration; and poets sing of brave deeds and noble sacrifices to freedom, till hardier souls rush to battle, martyrs to their love of country. Such a trumpet blast as the hymn just alluded to has rarely been heard from the lips of poet and never before from woman. Its stirring words are still sung though the slavery days have passed and the fiery gospel is no longer writ in rows of burnished steel. The devout spirit of consecration expressed in the last stanza saves the poem from any imputation of wrathfulness inconsistent with true poetry. Julia Ward Howe, inspired by the exciting events of the slavery struggle, rose above herself, above her race and wrote in the excess of her feeling straight from her indignant soul the hymn that caught the hearts of her countrymen.

Battle Hymn of the Republic

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming
of the Lord;

He is trampling out the vintage where the
grapes of wrath are stored;

He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his
terrible swift sword:

His truth is marching on.

I have seen him in the watchfires of a hundred
circling camps;

They have builded him an altar in the evening
dews and damps:

I can read his righteous sentence by the dim
and flaring lamps;

His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished
rows of steel;

“As ye deal with my contemners, so with
you my grace shall deal;”

Let the hero, born of woman, crush the ser-
pent with his heel;

Since God is marching on.

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall
never call retreat;

He is sifting out the hearts of men before
his judgment seat;

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O, be swift, my soul, to answer him ! be
jubilant, my feet !

Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born
across the sea,

With a glory in his bosom that transfigures
you and me;

As he died to make men holy, let us die to
make men free,

While God is marching on.

The Recessional

God of our fathers, known of old —
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget !

But it needs study to be fully appreciated.
What is a Recessional? “Far-flung battle-line”
—What does the expression mean? How do we
(British) hold “dominion over the palm and
pine”? Have we colonies where the palm tree
grows and others where the pine is indigenous?

The tumult and the shouting dies —
The Captains and the Kings depart.
Still stands Thine ancient Sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget !

What tumult, what shouting dies? What
captain and what kings depart? Whence do they
go? What is the ancient Sacrifice? Is it the
“humble and contrite heart”? Where did Kip-

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ling find such an expression and why should he call such a heart an ancient sacrifice?

Far-called our navies melt away —
On dune and headland sinks the fire;
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre !
Judge of all Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget !

When and where have our (British, remember) navies melted away? What is the fire that sinks? Why does he mention dune and headland? What of Nineveh and Tyre? How can our pomp be one with that of those two cities?

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe—
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
Or lesser breeds without the law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget !

Who are the Gentiles? When have they boasted without awe? What is meant by “lesser breeds without the law”?

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard —

The Recessional

All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding calls not Thee to guard —
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on thy People, Lord!
Amen.

What is the tube, the shard? Why *iron* shard, *reeking* tube? How can dust be valiant? How can dust be built upon? What does the third line mean?

Now that its phrases are all thoroughly understood and the poem has been read several times without interruption, what seems to be the chief sentiment? What one central idea had Kipling to express? Does this appear in each stanza? What is there in the poem that should make it within a few months after its publication one of the most widely known and admired poems in the language? Why should it be as popular in America as in England?

Of *The Recessional* Kipling himself says :

“That poem gave me more trouble than anything I ever wrote. I had promised the *Times* a poem on the Jubilee, and when it became due, I had written nothing that had satisfied me. The *Times* began to want the poem badly, and sent letter after letter asking for it. I made many more attempts but no further progress. Finally the *Times* began sending telegrams. So I shut myself in a room with a determination to stay

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there until I had written a Jubilee poem. Sitting down with all my previous attempts before me I searched through those dozens of sketches, till at last I found just one line I liked. That was, 'Lest we forget.' Round these words *The Recessional* was written."

James Lane Allen says : —

"*The Recessional* is virile — nothing that he ever wrote is more so; yet is refined — as little else that he has written is. It is strong, but it is equally delicate. It is massive as a whole; it is in every line just as graceful. It is large enough to compass the scope of the British empire; it creates this immensity by the use of a few small details. It may be instantly understood and felt by all men in its obviousness; yet it is so rare that he alone, of all the millions of Englishmen could even think of writing it. The new, vast prayer of it rises from the ancient sacrifice of a contrite heart."

The Poet's Inspiration

The exciting causes of a poet's inspiration are as numerous and varied as his experiences and interests. A few of these have been noticed: in Wordsworth, the daffodil; in Longfellow, the rainy day; in Tennyson, the harbor bar; in Julia Ward Howe, the slavery agitation; and in Kipling, the Queen's Jubilee. Only the last two can be called general in that they were causes of excitement and interest to a whole people: the others moved the poets only and would have attracted no attention from the ordinary observer. But there are many emotions so general in their character that the whole world has felt them.

FAMILY AFFECTION

No one has lived free from family affection and the poets have from the beginning made this the frequent subject of their verse. Whittier in the lyric he makes a part of *Snowbound* celebrates in delicate loving words the emotion so universal. Father and mother, his sisters, the uncle, the schoolmaster and the other guest have gone and only the one brother remains alive. It is the affection surviving death, tintured by the sense of deep and irreparable loss, that wrings the strong man's heart while he sings:

Family Affection

What matter how the night behaved?
What matter how the north-wind raved?
Blow high, blow low, not all its snow
Could quench our hearth-fire's ruddy glow.
O Time and Change! — with hair as gray
As was my sire's that winter day,
How strange it seems, with so much gone
Of life and love, to still live on!
Ah, brother! only I and thou
Are left of all that circle now, —
The dear home faces whereupon
That fitful firelight paled and shone.
Henceforward, listen as we will,
The voices of that hearth are still;
Look where we may, the wide earth o'er,
Those lighted faces smile no more.
We tread the path their feet have worn,
We sit beneath their orchard trees,
We hear, like them, the hum of bees
And rustle of the bladed corn;
We turn the pages that they read,
Their written words we linger o'er,
But in the sun they cast no shade,
No voice is heard, no sign is made,
No step is on the conscious floor.

But seer and poet as he is, his sadness is tempered by his faith, and in confident expectation of a

Family Affection

future reunion he voices his trust and showers his pity on those to whom death is final extinction:

Yet Love will dream and Faith will trust
(Since He who knows our need is just)
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.
Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress-trees !
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play !
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own !

In *The Princess*, Tennyson incorporates a sweet little song breathing all the wealth of mother love in numbers so sweet and low that even the mature reader is carried back to his infancy, to eventide and lullabies from lips that have long since ceased to sing and to days when mother grieved over father's even temporary absence, though never doubting his return to home and love:

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea !

Family Affection

Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
 Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one,
 sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
 sleep.

There were six of these exquisite little songs included in *The Princess* but not in the first edition. Tennyson himself says of them: "The songs were not an afterthought. Before the first edition came out I deliberated with myself whether I should put songs in between the separate divisions of the poem; again I thought, the poem will explain itself; but the public did not see that the child was the heroine of the piece, and at last I conquered my laziness and inserted them."

Friendship

Another seems to follow naturally in this connection:

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears !
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

FRIENDSHIP

Friendship is only less strong than family ties and the following from Tennyson expresses the sadness of his soul at the loss of his most cherished companion, and is interesting as it foreshadows that greatest of all lyrics, *In Memoriam*. He says, "This melody of tears was made in a Lincolnshire lane at five o'clock in the morning, between blossoming hedges."

“Break, Break, Break”

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play !
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O sea !
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

Burns, too, in another vein voices the universal sentiment in recollection of the friends of other days:

Auld Lang Syne

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min' ?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' auld lang syne ?

CHORUS.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine ;
But we've wandered monie a weary foot,
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
Frae morning sun till dine ;
But seas between us braid hae roared,
Sin' auld lang syne.

And here's a hand, my trusty frere,
And gie's a hand o' thine ;
And we'll tak a right guid willie-waught,
For auld lang syne.

The Past

And surely you'll be your pint-stoup,
And surely I'll be mine ;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

THE PAST

For comparison, here is another lyric from *The Princess*. This, Tennyson says "was written at Tintern when the woods all yellow with autumn were seen through the ruined windows. It is what I have always felt even from a boy, and what as a boy I called the 'passion of the past' and it is so always with me now; it is the distance that charms me in the landscape, the future and the past and not the immediate to-day in which I move."

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the under-
world,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge ;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Love

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering
square ;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

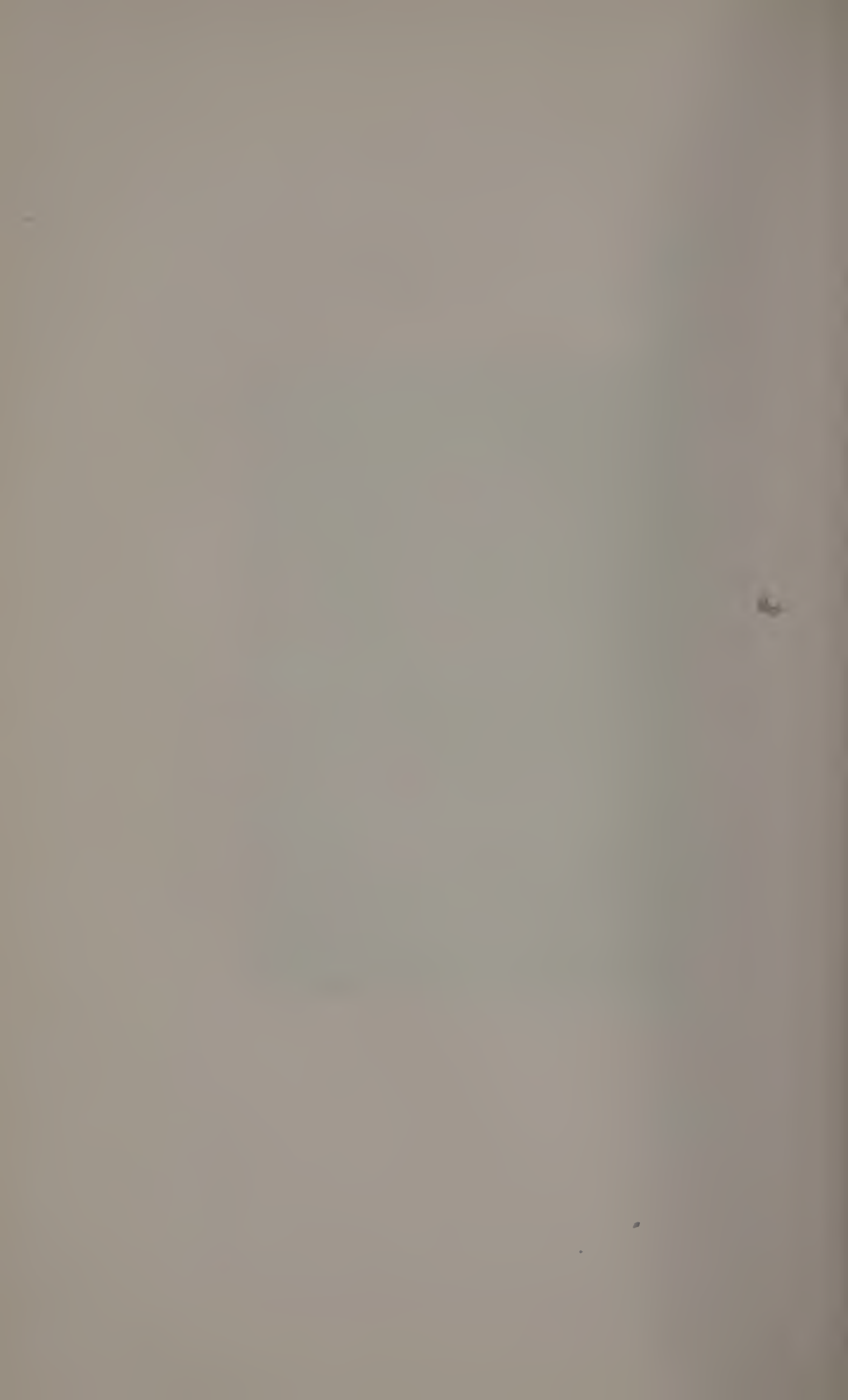
Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others ; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

LOVE.

But the richest treasures of poetry have been devoted to the love of man for woman. In the passionate sonnet of which the following is a type, one phase is seen, a phase which has not infrequently degenerated into maudlin sentiment or a reckless disregard of that purity of feeling which must always characterize the highest poetry.



EDMUND SPENSER



One Autumn Night

HERBERT BASHFORD

Can I forget that glorious autumn night,
So full of joyous pain, when you and I
Stood on the shore beneath a cloudless sky,
And watched the moon, all drenched with holy
light,
Sail slowly o'er, and toss a veil of white
Across the heaving sea? — when waves
rode by
And pressed broad palms upon the rocks,
to try
And bear away the rough stone from our sight?
Ah, no! 'twas then I spoke to you of love.—
My secret which you long ere that had
guessed;
'Twas then I first knew passion's fiery heat
And kissed your cheek, your lips, while high
above
A great star shook, and in its burning breast,
As in my own, a red heart beat and beat.

Edmund Spenser before the year 1600 wrote:

Golden Fetters

What guile is this, that those her golden tresses
She doth attire under a net of gold ;
And with sly skill so cunningly them dresses,
That which is gold or hair may scarce be
told ?

Is it that men's frail eyes, which gaze too
bold,
She may entangle in that golden snare ;
And being caught, may craftily enfold
Their weaker hearts, which are not well
aware ?

Take heed, therefore, mine eyes, how ye do
stare

Henceforth too rashly on that guileful net,
In which, if ever ye entrapp'ed are,
Out of her bands you by no means shall get.
Fondness it were for any, being free,
To covet fetters, though they golden be.

Longfellow translates from the German :

Beware!

I know a maiden fair to see,

Take care !

She can both false and friendly be,

Beware ! Beware !

Trust her not,

She is fooling thee !

She has two eyes, so soft and brown,

Take care !

She gives a side-glance and looks down,

Beware ! Beware !

Trust her not,

She is fooling thee !

And she has hair of a golden hue,

Take care !

And what she says, it is not true,

Beware ! Beware !

Trust her not,

She is fooling thee !

She has a bosom as white as snow,

Take care !

She knows how much it is best to show,

Beware ! Beware !

Trust her not,

She is fooling thee !

Love

She gives thee a garland woven fair,
Take care !
It is a fool's-cap for thee to wear,
Beware ! Beware !
Trust her not,
She is fooling thee !

Among the most beautiful tributes ever paid to womanhood is the following poem, by Wordsworth :

She was a Phantom of Delight

She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight ;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament.
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn —
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

Love

I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too !
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty ;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food ;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.
And now I see with eyes serene
The very pulse of the machine ;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveler between life and death ;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command ;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.

Love

Edgar A. Poe, than whom no one possessed a greater mastery of the true music of verse, penned these lines:

To Helen

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.
On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome.
Lo, in yon brilliant window niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

To One in Paradise

Thou wast all that to me, love,
For which my soul did pine —
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last !
Ah, starry Hope ! that didst arise
But to be overcast !
A voice from out the Future cries,
“On, on !” — but o’er the Past
(Dim gulf !) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast !

For alas ! alas ! with me
The light of life is o’er !
No more — no more — no more —
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar !

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy dark eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams —

Love

In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams.

And Burns catching the music of the Scottish river surrounds his Mary with the soothing atmosphere of his love :

Flow Gently, Sweet Afton

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green
braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy
praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her
dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds through
the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny
den,
Thou green-crested lap-wing, thy screaming
forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighboring hills,
Far marked with the courses of clear winding
rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.



THE BIRTHPLACE OF WHITTIER

Sorrow

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys
below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses
blow;
There oft as mild evening weeps over the lea
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and
me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it
glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gathering sweet flowerets she stems thy
clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green
braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my
lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her
dream.

SORROW

But it seems that even in the excitement of love
a poet could scarcely do his greatest work. It
was only when his heart was wrenched by grief
and to his passion was added the sting of loss

Sorrow

that his soul found utterance in sweetest melodies.
So in Burns and Poe we find the finest songs
are nearest the cry of breaking hearts :

Highland Mary

ROBERT BURNS

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie !
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last farewell
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How gently bloomed the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasped her to my bosom !
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' monie a vow, and locked embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore ourselves asunder:



AYR—THE BURNS MONUMENT

Sorrow

But, oh ! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early !
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary !

Oh, pale, pale now, those rosy lips
I aft hae kissed sae fondly,
And closed for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly !
And mouldering now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed me dearly !
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

To Mary in Heaven

ROBERT BURNS

Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary ! dear departed shade !
Where is thy place of blissful rest ?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid ?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast ?

That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallowed grove,

Sorrow

Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past,
Thy image at our last embrace,—
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr, gurgling, kissed his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green;
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
Twined am'rous round the raptured scene;
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray—
Till too, too soon, the flowing west
Proclaimed the speed of wingéd day.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly brooks with miser care;
Time but th' impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

Annabel Lee

EDGAR A. POE

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may
know

By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other
thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea;
But we loved with a love that was more than
love—

I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the wingéd seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsman came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulcher
In this kingdom by the sea.

Sorrow

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me —
Yes! — that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the
love
Of those who were older than we —
Of many far wiser than we —
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee :

For the moon never beams, without bringing
me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright
eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the
side
Of my darling, — my darling, — my life and
my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

Death and Immortality

DEATH AND IMMORTALITY

Death is a frequent theme and one of universal interest as is the immortality of loved ones, their return to us in spirit form or our meeting and knowing them hereafter:

The Reaper and the Flowers

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

There is a Reaper, whose name is Death,
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.

“Shall I have naught that is fair?” saith he;
“Have naught but the bearded grain?
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet
to me,
I will give them all back again.”

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

“My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,”
The Reaper said, and smiled;

Death and Immortality

“Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where He was once a child. .

They shall all bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints, upon their garments white,
These sacred blossoms wear.”

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love;
She knew she should find them all again
In the fields of light above.

O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
'T was an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.

Footsteps of Angels

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

When the hours of Day are numbered,
And the voices of the Night
Wake the better soul, that slumbered,
To a holy, calm delight;

Ere the evening lamps are lighted,
And, like phantoms grim and tall,
Shadows from the fitful firelight
Dance upon the parlor wall;

Then the forms of the departed
Enter at the open door;
The beloved, the true-hearted,
Come to visit me once more;

He, the young and strong, who cherished
Noble longings for the strife,
By the roadside fell and perished,
Weary with the march of life !

They, the holy ones and weakly,
Who the cross of suffering bore,
Folded their pale hands so meekly,
Spake with us on earth no more !

Death and Immortality

And with them the Being Beauteous,
Who unto my youth was given,
More than all things else to love me,
And is now a saint in heaven.

With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes that messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine.

And she sits and gazes at me
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies.

Uttered not, yet comprehended,
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,
Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,
Breathing from her lips of air.

O, though oft depressed and lonely,
All my fears are laid aside,
If I but remember only
Such as these have lived and died!

The Poet's Moods

Poets, delicate in sensibilities, refined in taste, strong in emotions have been peculiarly susceptible to the influences surrounding them, and subject to moods of which coarser-grained mortals know nothing. So there are many poems of highest art which have had their birth in feelings that could not have been accounted for in ordinary ways. Sadness, melancholy, and dejection are as common as high spirits, unreasoning gayety or calm and quiet pensiveness. In a state of such unreasoning dejection brought on, one may be tempted to conjecture, by some vague premonition of his untimely end, Shelley penned in Naples some stanzas that for beauty of form and unity of thought are almost unrivaled:

Stanzas

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

(Written in dejection, near Naples)

The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might,
The breath of the moist earth is light,

The Poet's Moods

Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds', the birds', the ocean floods',
The City's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple seaweeds strown ;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers,
thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone,
The lightning of the noon-tide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my
emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned —
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround —
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure; —
To me that cup has been dealt in another
measure.

The Poet's Moods

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan ;
They might lament — for I am one
Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

Thoughts of the last bitter hour are universal and but few have escaped the moments in which they felt the enduring nature of river and sea, the eternal power of sun and moon, and realized inarticulately the pathos of their own departure, but a Tennyson is necessary to make the farewell beautiful:

A Farewell

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver:
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet, then a river:
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Lyric Poetry
Songs and Odes



EDGAR ALLAN POE

Lyrics

Enough has been said to show the limitations under which the poet labors and the marvelous skill with which he uses the material at hand. Things so simple in themselves as to attract no passing glance show to him truths that lie too deep for recognition. The base metal of the commonplace is transmuted to the pure gold of poetry and will pass current among mankind as long as time endures. But it is not given to us all to at once recognize the true, and separate it from the false. Our tastes are depraved, our insight is poor, experience has taught us little or has failed to teach us the things that are necessary to the interpretation of the messages we receive. Our ears are not attuned to the music, and our souls, debased by our coarse daily lives, fail to recognize the voice of divinity even when it murmurs in the soothing rhythm of verse. The fault is in ourselves. It is not to our credit that poetry has no charm for us. The cares of home, the pressure of business, the strife for position and honor have no claims upon us superior to the demand for esthetic growth, or spiritual advancement. The pulpit and the stage can not in the nature of things exert so refining an influence as the quiet persistent calls of poetry. He who has

Lyrics

learned to read and to be moved by the things he reads has taken the first long step toward the highest and the best. Though seeing the beauty of expression, the living figures that give force and being to the language ; hearing the music of aptly chosen words and rhythmical arrangement and recognizing those charms of form that cost the poet such anxious hours of preparation, still it is to none of these that our ultimate attention is directed. The truth underlying it, the life-lesson it teaches, the inspiration it gives, the solace it lends to hours of grief, the joy it brings to weary hearts, these are what make poetry valuable, these are what make it the crowning glory of literature.

Dallas says : "Where history is fact, poetry is truth" ; Shairp : "It is thought touched by imagination and emotion," and Alfred Austin, Tennyson's successor as poet laureate of England : "Poetry is a transfiguration of life."

The highest type of literary expression is poetry and the most perfect creation of poetic imagination is the lyric. Technically a lyric is a song, a short poem that can be set to music. But this must be interpreted in a wide sense for though all the songs that are sung are lyrics, the greater number of lyrics were never intended to be fitted to the closer requirements of vocal harmony. They deal with all subjects and have few requirements of form, though form is an essential element and a matter of great importance, for to the perfection

Lyrics

of form much of the intense effect of the lyric is due. Like the essay the lyric is a subjective composition, it is confessedly the expression of the poet's personal emotion and his own experiences. His mind, his soul speak to us ; he does not interpret the thoughts and feelings of another. The lyric is usually contemplative and full of the choicest results of the poet's meditations. It does not seek to persuade, but to influence action indirectly through direct appeals to the emotions.

Directions for Study

The poems that follow are for study as indicated in this volume. The student should understand, compare and classify, but more than all, enjoy. Each poem has some point of interest. One may give the delicate pleasure that is found in sweet sounds and charming measures, another may bring up thoughts of the past or dreams for the future and a third may have for some struggling soul a message of hope and encouragement. Some are light and airy things that will scarcely bear analysis while others will require days of meditation before their full depth is sounded. They are modern and deal with the present; they are old and filled with the wisdom of the ancients; they are simple and graceful, without ornament or allusion; or they are formed on elaborate models, glitter with figures and are redolent of classic lore. But all have stood the test of time or survived the critic's keenest stroke and even if some lack general popularity there are always a few choice, meditative souls to whom every one is a favorite. Read them; lay aside the book and think of them; pick up the volume again in the intervals of your work and lighten the labors of the day with them. Remember that real enjoyment of poetry is a quiet personal one; that it

Directions for Study

grows with age and that in sickness or in enforced idleness a mind stored with these richest treasures of the world's highest art is proof against weariness and despair.

“A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth.”

“A poet is a nightingale who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician.”—*Shelley*.

“O pierlesse Poesye! Where is then thy place?
If nor in Princes pallace thou doe sitt,
(And yet is Princes pallace the most fitt,)
Ne brest of baser birth doth thee embrace,
Then make the winges of thine aspyring wit,
And whence thou canst, fly back to heaven
apace.”

—*The Vision of Piers Plowman*.

It is a very easy matter to carry the analysis of a poem too far. It is not wise in every instance to search for the particular charm which makes any poem our favorite. Yet in reading poetry as in reading a story we must learn to take unconscious notice as we read. The only way in which we can train ourselves to take this unconscious notice is by making a conscious and definite analysis of a number of poems. It will perhaps help us in our study if we recapitulate, at this point in our study of poetry, the points which have

Directions for Study

been mentioned and which are the ones that we must learn to recognize and appreciate.

I. METER. It is not necessary that we should classify and name the meter of every poem that we read but it is essential that as we read we feel the flow of the verse. If this is not natural to us, the only way in which we can acquire it is by study and reading aloud. We must for the time *scan* the poetry until the special qualities of the different meters touch us as soon as our eyes meet the paper.

II. MELODY. The underlying melody that is stronger even than the regular accents, the combination of agreeable sounds with appropriate stress, forms the chief attraction that poetry has for the cultivated ear. This we can learn to appreciate only by reading aloud.

III. RHYME. Here again it is necessary only that we should hear and enjoy the recurrent rhymes. This can best be done by consciously for a time picking out in each poem we read the rhyme scheme that the poet has followed.

IV. THOUGHT. As in prose, the thought must be mastered by a study of words, allusions and the figures of speech.

V. SENTIMENT. Poetry appeals to the emotions. We must not look at it in a coldly intellectual way but must allow our feelings to be swayed by what appeals to us.

VI. BEAUTY. Beauty is the great characteristic

Directions for Study

of poetry, beauty in form, beauty in expression, beauty in sentiment.

VII. INSPIRATION. Great poems inspire us to higher thoughts, to more exalted feelings, to nobler acts. Their effect is refining and if we are wise we place no barriers in the way of their influence.

Songs

All the poems printed in this volume are lyrics. Our language is singularly rich in this class of poetry, and we have been embarrassed by the number from which we can choose. The student will find many more in his general reading that are worthy of a place in this course.

Songs form a class of lyrics as varied in content as the possible subjects in life. One might consider them as sacred and secular and under the former recognize the psalms, which our poets have many times rendered into metrical form, not infrequently detracting from the sublimity of the originals. "The Lord is my Shepherd" needs no change, no remodeling from the biblical version to make it a true lyric, but that it may be sung to the tunes of our churches it has more than once been paraphrased. For the sake of comparison this somewhat noted version by James Montgomery is reproduced:

The Lord is my shepherd, no want shall I know;
I feed in green pastures, safe-folded I rest;
He leadeth my soul where the still waters flow,
Restores me when wandering, redeems when
oppressed.

Songs

Through the valley and shadow of death
though I stray,

Since thou art my guardian no evil I fear ;
Thy rod shall defend me, Thy staff be my stay ;
No harm can befall with my Comforter near.

In the midst of affliction my table is spread ;
With blessings unmeasured my cup run-
neth o'er ;

With perfume and oil Thou anointest my
head ;

Oh ! what shall I ask of thy Providence
more ?

Let goodness and mercy, my bountiful God,
Still follow my steps till I meet Thee above :
I seek, by the path which my forefathers trod
Through the land of their sojourn, Thy
kingdom of love.

Hymns are religious songs expressing devout reverence for the deity, displaying confidence and faith in the goodness of God, breathing a prayer for help in hours of difficulty and distress, or for consolation in the hour of affliction. Our literature is full of these noble poems, and their lofty sentiments, clothed in beautiful words sung to the thrilling music of other inspired composers, have been potent factors in the culture and refinement

Lead, Kindly Light

of the race. Some of course are sectarian and thereby lose much of their power for universal good, but there are many grand hymns that can be sung with perfect sincerity and deep emotion by members of every creed. Cardinal Newman has given us in *Lead, Kindly Light* one of those hymns that smile at creed and voice the universal trust of the Christian world. Others will suggest themselves to the reader.

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on ;
The night is dark and I am far from home ;
Lead thou me on ;
Keep thou my feet ; I do not ask to see
The distant scene ; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Shouldst lead me on ;
I loved to choose and see my path ; but now
Lead thou me on ;
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years.

So long thy power has blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent till
The night is gone,

Songs

And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which, I have loved long since, and lost
the while.

Secular songs are written upon nearly every conceivable topic of human interest and are more numerous than any other form of literature, but so many of them are inferior in composition and so dependent upon the jingle of the tunes to which they are sung that their life is little longer than the time consumed in their production. But a large number are conceived in the true spirit of art and are as worthy of immortality as anything we read.

There are comic songs that sparkle with wit and whose music laughs with the hearer; sentimental and love songs whose sensuous cadences intensify the passion of their words; convivial songs where toasts are drunk to the accompaniment of the clinking glasses; and patriotic songs that roll with the ringing cheers of thousands and the tramp of armed men.

Odes

When one thinks of all the poems that he may properly call songs he begins to see the importance of the group in literature. But lyric is a far more comprehensive term. There are still three large classes of lyrics each distinct in itself, though, as we see if we try to draw the lines closely, shading off into one another. Usually these are in the nature of a direct address to some person, place, or thing, and are distinguished one from another by the nature of the subject or the rules of form. All are in a greater or less degree complimentary to the thing addressed and show interest, respect, admiration or love. The ode and elegy have most in common, although the latter is a tribute to the dead. The sonnet partakes deeply of the nature of the others but is set off by very arbitrary limitations of form.

There are no rules governing the form of the ode ; the poet is at liberty to select whatever form seems best adapted to his purpose. The length of the stanza, the meter, the rhyme, may be as varied as his fancy dictates, but the ode is an address direct and personal, an address with praise for its object. The subject may be a flower, a piece of pottery, a person, a bird or a nation, but some definite inciting object is necessary. The ode is

Odes

subjective in that the poet expresses his own feeling of admiration or reverence. Often there is an acknowledgment of a benefit conferred, a lesson learned, or affection returned. From these conditions, namely, the liberty of form, the direct and powerful inspiration, the sincere desire to return a favor, a poet might naturally be expected to produce his choicest work and so he has done.

Ode to a Skylark

The skylark is unknown in this country, but in England it has always been a source of great delight to everyone who has seen and heard it. In early morning, springing from the grass it goes upward in spiral curves singing its melodious song till lost to view at some great height. This unique flight and the sweet song that accompanies it have made the lark the subject of numberless allusions in literature, and more than once it has been the subject of poetic or prose description. To Shelley it was the inspiration for his most musical lyric.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit !
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire ;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever
singing.

Odes

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightning,
Thou dost float and run ;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight ;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill
delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is
overflowed.

What thou art we know not ;
What is most like thee ?

Ode to a Skylark

From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded
not :

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows
her bower :

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it
from the view :

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives

Odes

Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves :

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth
surpass :

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine :
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymenæal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden
want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain ?
What fields, or waves, or mountains ?
What shapes of sky or plain ?
What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance
of pain ?

Ode to a Skylark

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal
stream!

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of sad-
dest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come
near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,

Odes

Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the
ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listen-
ing now.

This is a poem that repays the closest study. Notice the form carefully. Is it the same throughout the poem? What is the meter of the fifth verse? Is it the same in every stanza? Is the meter of the other verses identical? Is it similar? What line rhymes with the first? How many syllables rhyme? What line rhymes with the second? How many syllables rhyme? Is it a perfect rhyme? With what does the fifth line rhyme? Is the scheme the same in every stanza? Are there any defective lines?

Find all the names he gives the skylark. Pick out all the similes or metaphors he uses in speaking of the bird. Collect all the figures by which he describes an action of the bird. Collect all the expressions by which he characterizes the song.

L. O' G.

To the Cuckoo

In language taken from the poem, tell the effect the song has upon the poet. Learn lines that make in themselves gems of thought for future memory.

Having done all this thoughtfully, read the poem aloud as expressively as you can. This is a practice that should be followed in all your study of poetry. Read aloud, if possible to some listener. Have someone read to you. The sound, the music, is so important in poetry that you must not miss it and you must hear much poetry read aloud before you can catch the entrancing melody of the verse by glancing at the lines.

To the Cuckoo

The English cuckoo differs from the skylark in many respects. It has no pleasant song, its notes are harsh and unattractive. It seeks the deep woods, rarely showing itself to anybody. Rapid on the wing, quick of eye, sly in its movements, only the acute vision of the adept bird-seeker is rewarded by frequent glimpses of this woodland hermit. In character it is not admirable, as it makes no home for itself, but, placing its eggs in the nest of some smaller bird, it abandons its offspring to the doubtful care of its unwilling hosts. But in England the bird is a harbinger of spring and as such its mysterious voice always attracts attention. Wordsworth celebrates it thus:

Odes

O blithe new-comer ! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O cuckoo ! shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering voice ?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near.

Though babbling only to the vale
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the spring !
Even yet thou art to me
No bird — but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my schoolboy days
I listened to; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush and tree and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love —
Still longed for, never seen.

Ode to Duty

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed bird ! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, fairy place,
That is fit home for thee !

For the sake of comparison apply to this poem the same points for study given to the skylark. Upon that basis, which poem is the more musical ? Which has the greater felicity of expression ? Which contains the most striking lesson for the reader ? Which is the greater poem ?

Ode to Duty

The sense of duty, last to be developed in the human being, most abstract and difficult to follow, has been personified by Wordsworth, whose deep insight leads him to recognize the highest and grandest elements in this highest of all motives. He addresses Duty, compares her with the lesser incentives to right action, pleads for her activity when minor motives fail to rule and then turning his thoughts inward consecrates himself to her service.

Odes

Stern daughter of the voice of God !

O Duty ! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove:
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe,
From vain temptations dost set free,
And calm'st the weary strife of frail hu-
manity !

There are who ask not if thine eye

Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely

Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad hearts, without reproach or blot,
Who do thy work and know it not:
Long may the kindly impulse last !
But thou, if they should totter, teach them
to stand fast !

Serene will be our days and bright,

And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,

And joy its own security.

And they a blissful course may hold
Even now who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed,
Yet seek thy firm support according to their
need.

Ode to Duty

I, loving freedom, and untried —

No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide —

Too blindly have reposed my trust;
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly,
if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,

Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control,

But in the quietness of thought.
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance desires;
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern lawgiver! yet thou dost wear

The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair

As is the smile upon thy face.
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through
thee, are fresh and strong.

Odes

To humbler functions, awful power!

I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give,
And in the light of truth thy bondman let
me live!

Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington

In an entirely different vein is Tennyson's *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, which was published in 1852. It is especially deserving of study because of its unique form as well as its solemn meaning. Its great length and elegiac character make it a type quite alone in the language. To follow the train of thought will require study, for here as is frequently the case the poet assumes in his reader the same mental condition that animates himself and expects his thought to be followed even across those silent periods which during composition have been given to meditation. The stanzas of varying length and irregular meter mark different phases of thought, from one to the other of which the transition is frequently abrupt, yet when the

Death of Wellington

ode is viewed as a whole it is found to possess that unity of sentiment and purpose that a poem should have.

Determine the characteristic idea of each stanza and fill in for yourself the hiatus between it and the next. In the stanza where Wellington is presented to the spirit of the great Nelson, notice who utters each sentence. The absence of quotation marks makes this a little difficult but a close reading will accomplish it. What is the most notable characteristic of Wellington as Tennyson sees him? What is the highest tribute paid to the great leader? Which stanza seems to you the most fitting? Can you find evidence in the poem of the use of sonorous words to fit the solemnity of the occasion? Is the meter fit for the grandeur of the subject?

Bury the Great Duke

With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke

To the noise of the mourning of a mighty
nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

Where shall we lay the man whom we
deplore?

Odes

Here, in streaming London's central roar.¹
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long, long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet²
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretense,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,

1. In the crypt of St. Paul's cathedral, London.

2. Alludes to the only time Tennyson saw the Duke of Wellington.

Death of Wellington

And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that
blew!

Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's³ victor will be seen
no more.

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mold.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds:

3. Napoleon Bonaparte, defeated by Wellington at Waterloo.

Odes

Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name
Which he has worn so pure of blame.
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

Who is he that cometh, like an honor'd guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and
with priest,

Death of Wellington

With a nation weeping, and breaking on my
rest ? ⁴

Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous
man,

The greatest sailor since our world began.

Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he

Was great by land as thou by sea;
His foes were thine; he kept us free;

O give him welcome, this is he

Worthy of our gorgeous rites,

And worthy to be laid by thee;

For this is England's greatest son,

He that gain'd a hundred fights,

Nor ever lost an English gun:

This is he that far away

Against the myriads of Assaye ⁵

Clash'd with his fiery few and won;

And underneath another sun,

Warring on a later day,

Round affrighted Lisbon drew ⁶

The treble works, the vast designs

4. The speaker here is Lord Nelson, the greatest English admiral.

5. Wellington's first victory at a little town in India.

6. One of the great victories over the French.

Odes

Of his labor'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud Sabbath⁷ shook the spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and over-
threw.

7. Sunday, June 18, 1815. The battle of Waterloo.

Death of Wellington

So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty Seaman,⁸ tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O savior of the silver-coasted isle,⁹
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,

8. Nelson annihilated the French fleet in the battle of the Nile (1798); Denmark's fleet was defeated at Copenhagen on the Baltic (1801); and in 1805 Nelson gained his greatest victory and lost his life in a battle with the navies of France and Spain off Trafalgar, a cape near the entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar.

9. England. An allusion to its white chalk cliffs that make the southern coast.

Odes

Confused by brainless mobs and lawless
Powers;

Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly
set

His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it
ours.

And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;
O Statesman, guard us, guard the eye, the
soul

Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be
just.

But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons molder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever; and whatever tempests lour

Death of Wellington

For ever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right:
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,

Odes

The path of duty was the way to glory: ¹⁰
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory.
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God himself is moon and sun.
Such was he: his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure:
Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory:
And let the land whose hearths he saved from
shame

10. When someone said to Wellington, that the word "glory" never occurred in his dispatches, he replied, "If glory had been my object, the doing my duty must have been the means."

Death of Wellington

For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmolded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see:
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung:
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and
brain

Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane:
We revere, and while we hear

Odes

The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will;
Tho' world on world in myraid myraids roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March¹¹ wails in the people's
ears:
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs
and tears:
The black earth yawns: the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown

11. In Handel's Oratorio, *Saul*.

Death of Wellington

Than any wreath that man can weave him.
But speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.¹²

12. These words were the last that Tennyson heard — his son uttering them in prayer as the poet was dying.

Selected Odes

The following beautiful odes are worthy of many readings. A really fine poem can be read again and again, each time with increasing pleasure; it can be committed to memory and repeated till one wearies of it, yet the time will come when it will find its way back to the recollection at opportune moments and its words have a new meaning and an added charm. To learn the poem or the choice sentiments that attract one's attention is the best of training, for, aside from the ever-recurring pleasure given by that knowledge, and aside from the spiritual uplift they give, there comes from such an intimate knowledge an increased power of interpretation, a more refined susceptibility to literary excellence. Learn, then, your favorites, and "when in vacant or in pensive mood" you will find your heart dancing with the music of immortal verse.

To a Skylark

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!

Dost thou despise the earth where cares
abound?

Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye

Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?

Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music
still!

To the last point of vision, and beyond,

Mount, daring warbler! that love-prompted
strain

('T wixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)

Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to
sing

All independent of the leafy spring.

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;

A privacy of glorious life is thine,

Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood

Of harmony, with instinct more divine;

Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam—

True to the kindred points of Heaven and
Home.

To the Fringed Gentian

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night.

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

To the Daisy

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Bright flower, whose home is everywhere!
A pilgrim bold in Nature's care,
And oft, the long year through, the heir
 Of joy or sorrow,
Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
 The forest thorough!

And wherefore? Man is soon deprest;
A thoughtless thing! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
 Or on his reason;
But thou wouldst teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
 And every season.

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
 Yet pleased and willing;
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy function apostolical
 In peace fulfilling.



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

To the Dandelion

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the
way,

Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May,

Which children pluck, and, full of pride,
uphold,

High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,

Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth — thou art more dear
to me

Than all the prouder Summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,

Nor wrinkled the lean brow

Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;

'Tis the spring's largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,

Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

To the Dandelion

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;
The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart and heed not space or time:
Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee
Feels a more Summer-like, warm ravishment
In the white lily's breezy tent,
His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows in the grass,
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,
Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue
That from the distance sparkle through
Some woodland gap, and of a sky above
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth
move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked
with thee;
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,
Who from the dark old tree
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,
And I, secure in childish piety,
Listened as if I heard an angel sing

Odes

With news from Heaven, which he did
bring
Fresh every day to my untainted ears,
When birds and flowers and I were happy
peers.

Thou art the type of those meek charities
Which make up half the nobleness of life,
Those cheap delights the wise
Pluck from the dusty wayside of earth's strife;
Words of frank cheer, glances of friendly eyes,
Love's smallest coin, which yet to some may
give

The morsel that may keep alive
A starving heart, and teach it to behold
Some glimpse of God where all before was
cold.

Thy winged seeds, whereof the winds take
care,

Are like the words of poet and of sage

Which through the free heaven fare,
And, now unheeded, in another age
Take root, and to the gladdened future bear
That witness which the present would not
heed,

Bringing forth many a thought and deed,
And, planted safely in the eternal sky,
Bloom into stars which earth is guided by.

To the Dandelion

Full of deep love thou art, yet not more full
Than all thy common brethren of the ground,
Wherein, were we not dull,
Some words of highest wisdom might be found;
Yet earnest faith from day to day may cull
Some syllables, which, rightly joined, can
make

A spell to soothe life's bitterest ache,
And ope Heaven's portals, which are near us
still,
Yea, nearer even than the gates of Ill.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art !
Thou teachest me to deem
More sacredly of every human heart,
Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam
Of Heaven, and could some wondrous secret
show,

Did we but pay the love we owe,
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
On all these living pages of God's book.

But let me read thy lesson right or no,
Of one good gift from thee my heart is sure;
Old I shall never grow
While thou each year dost come to keep me
pure

Odes

With legends of my childhood; ah, we owe
Well more than half life's holiness to these
Nature's first lowly influences,
At thought of which the heart's glad doors
burst ope,
In dreariest days, to welcome peace and hope.

To a Waterfowl

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of
day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee
wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,¹
Thy figure floats along.

NOTE.—“He says in a letter that he felt, as he walked up the hills, very forlorn and desolate indeed, not knowing what was to become of him in the big world, which grew bigger as he ascended, and yet darker with the coming on of night. The sun had already set, leaving behind it one of those brilliant seas of chrysolite and opal which often flood the New England skies; and, while he was looking upon the rosy splendor with rapt admiration, a solitary bird made wing along the illuminated horizon. He watched the lone wanderer until it was lost in the distance, asking himself whither it had come and to what far home it was flying. When he went to the house where he was to stop for the night, his mind was still full of what he had seen and felt, and he wrote these lines, as imperishable as our language, *The Waterfowl*.”—Parke Godwin in Biography of Bryant.

1. “From a very early period,” says Bryant, — “I am not sure that it was not from the very time that I wrote the poem — there seemed to me an incongruity between the idea of a figure painted on the sky and a figure moving, ‘floating’ across its face. If the figure were painted,

Odes

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall
bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven

then it would be fixed. The incongruity distressed me, and I could not be easy until I had made the change. I preferred a plain prosaic expression to a picturesque one which seemed to me false. 'Painted' expresses well the depth and strength of color which fixed my attention when I saw the bird—for the scene was founded on a real incident—but it contradicted the motion of the wings and the progress of the bird through the air."

Accordingly in different editions of the poem the words "limned upon," "shadowed on" and "seen against," have appeared.

To a Waterfowl

Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my
heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain
flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

To a Mouse

On Turning Her up in Her Nest with the Plow,

November, 1785

ROBERT BURNS

Wee, sleekit,¹ cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!

Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!²

I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murdering pattle!³

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou mayst thief;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker⁴ in a thrave⁵
'S a sma' request:

1. Sly.

2. Short race.

3. A scraper for cleaning a plow.

4. An ear of corn occasionally.

5. Twenty-four sheaves.

To a Mouse

I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,⁶
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage⁷ green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell⁸ and keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
And weary winter comin' fast,
And cozie, here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter⁹ past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,¹⁰
To thole¹¹ the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch¹² cauld!

6. The others.

7. Coarse uncut grass.

8. Sharp.

9. The sharp iron which cuts the sod before the plow.

10. Resting place.

11. Endure.

12. Hoar-frost.

Odes

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,¹³
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men,
Gang aft a-gley,¹⁴
An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear;
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear.

13. Not alone.

14. Often go wrong.

NOTE. — In this poem and the one *To a Mountain Daisy* does the allusion to the poet's own hard fate add or detract from the beauty of the composition? Do these allusions give any insight into his character? What was always uppermost in his mind?

To a Mountain Daisy

On turning one down with the Plow in April, 1786

ROBERT BURNS

Wee, modest, crimson-tippéd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure¹
 Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
 Thou bonnie gem!

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet!
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
 Wi' spreckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blithe to greet
 The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
 Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
 Thy tender form.
The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,

1. Dust.

Odes

High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield²
 O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie³ stibble-field,
 Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
 In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
 And low thou lies.

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet floweret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betrayed,
 And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soiled, is laid
 Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
 Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
 And whelm him o'er!

2. Shelter.

3. Barren or dry.

To a Mountain Daisy

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
 To mis'ry's brink,
Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
 He, ruin'd, sink !

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives, elate,
 Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
 Shall be thy doom !

Collected Lyrics

“My Heart Leaps Up”

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

My heart leaps up when I behold
 A rainbow in the sky.
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
 Or let me die!
The child is father of the man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

Songs from The Princess

ALFRED TENNYSON

I

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,
dying.

NOTE.—This was suggested by the music of a boatman's bugle on Lake Killarney.

Songs from The Princess

II

Home they brought her warrior dead:
She nor swoon'd nor utter'd cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept
Took a face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears—
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

Songs from The Princess

III

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the
sea;

The cloud may stoop from heaven and take
the shape

With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?

I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:

Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:

I strove against the stream and all in vain:

Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;

Ask me no more.

Boat Song

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Lady of the Lake

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances !
Honored and blest be the evergreen pine !
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line !
Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth lend it sap anew,
Gayly to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back again.

“Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !”

Ours is no sapling, chance sown by the fountain,
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf
on the mountain
The more shall Clan Alpine exult in her
shade.

Moored in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow:
Menteith and Breadalbane, then
Echo his praise again,
“Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !”

Boat Song

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen Fruin,
And Bannochar's groans to our slogan re-
plied;

Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in
ruin,

And the best of Loch-Lomond lie dead on
her side.

Widow and Saxon maid

Long shall lament our raid,

Think of Clan Alpine with fear and with
woe;

Lennox and Leven-glen

Shake when they hear again,

“Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !”

Row, vassals, row for the pride of the High-
lands !

Stretch to your oars for the evergreen pine !

O that the rosebud that graces yon islands

Were wreathed in a garland around him to
twine !

O that some seedling gem,

Worthy such noble stem,

Honored and blessed in their shadow might
grow !

Loud should Clan Alpine then

Ring from her deepest glen,

“Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !”

Allen-a-Dale

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Song from Rokeby

Allen-a-Dale has no fagot for burning,
Allen-a-Dale has no furrow for turning,
Allen-a-Dale has no fleece for the spinning,
Yet Allen-a-Dale has red gold for the winning.
Come read me my riddle ! Come hearken my
tale !

And tell me the craft of bold Allen-a-Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth prances in pride,
And he views his domains upon Arkindale
side.

The mere for his net, and the land for his
game,

The chase for the wild, and the park for the
tame ;

Yet the fish of the lake, and the deer of the
vale,

Are less free to Lord Dacre than Allen-a-Dale.

Allen-a-Dale was ne'er belted a knight,
Though his spur be as sharp, and his blade be
as bright ;

Allen-a-Dale

Allen-a-Dale is no baron or lord,
Yet twenty tall yoemen will draw at his word.
And the best of our nobles his bonnet will veil,
Who at Rere-cross on Stanmore meets Allen-a-
Dale.

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come;
The mother, she asked of his household and
home;
“Though the castle of Richmond stand fair
on the hill
My hall,” quoth bold Allen, “shows gallanter
still;
'Tis the blue vault of heaven, with its crescent
so pale,
And with all its bright spangles!” said Allen-a-
Dale.

The father was steel and the mother was stone;
They lifted the latch and they bade him be-
gone;
But loud, on the morrow, their wail and their
cry!
He had laughed on the lass with his bonny
black eye,
And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale,
And the youth it was told by, was Allen-a-
Dale.

Coronach

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Lady of the Lake

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The font, reappearing,
From the rain-drops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow !

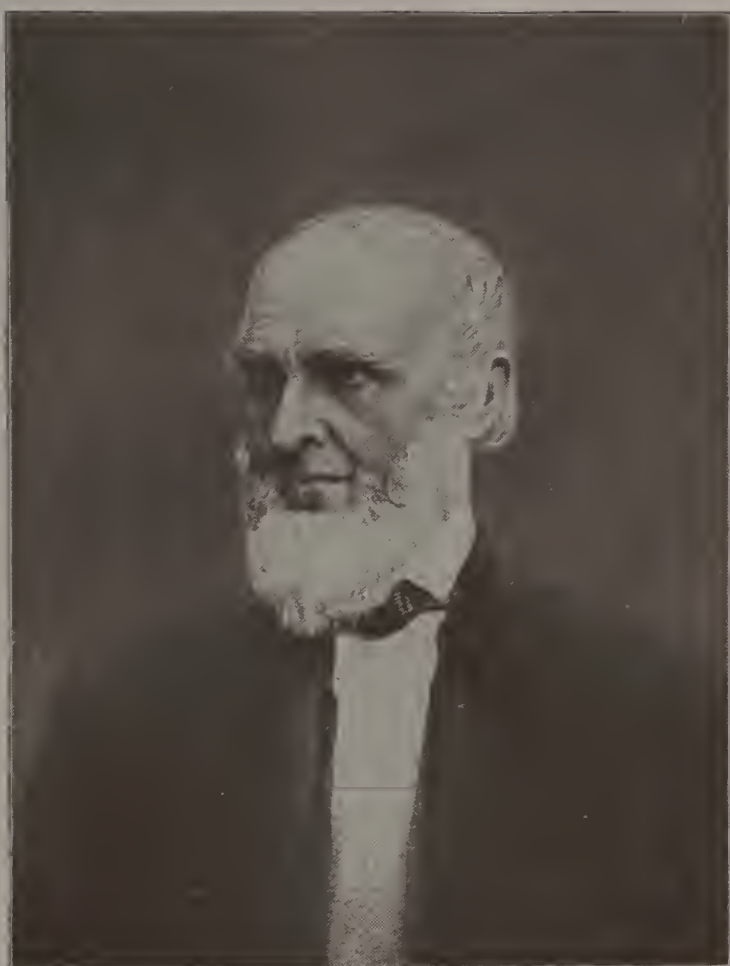
The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The Autumn winds rushing,
Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing,
When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,¹
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber !

1. The side of a hill where game is usually to be found.

Coronach

Like the dew on the mountain
Like the foam on the river
Like the bubble on the fountain
Thou art gone and for ever!



JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

The Lost Child

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

I wandered down the sunny glade
And ever mused, my love, of thee;
My thoughts, like little children, played,
As gayly and as guilelessly.

If any chanced to go astray,
Moaning in fear of coming harms,
Hope brought the wanderer back alway,
Safe nestled in her snowy arms.

From that soft nest the happy one
Looked up at me and calmly smiled;
Its hair shone golden in the sun,
And made it seem a heavenly child.

Dear Hope's blue eyes smiled mildly down,
And blest it with a love so deep,
That, like a nursling of her own,
It clasped her neck and fell asleep.

Softly

CHARLES GAMAGE EASTMAN

Softly.
She is lying
With her lips apart.

Softly.
She is dying
Of a broken heart.

Whisper.
She is going
To her final rest.

Whisper.
Life is growing
Dim within her breast.

Gently.
She is sleeping.
She has breathed her last.

Gently.
While you are weeping
She to heaven has past.

Hermione

BARRY CORNWALL

Thou hast beauty bright and fair,
Manner noble, aspect free,
Eyes that are untouched by care:
What then, do we ask of thee?
Hermione, Hermione?

Thou hast reason quick and strong,
Wit that envious men admire,
And a voice, itself a song!
What then can we still desire?
Hermione, Hermione?

Something thou dost want, O queen!
(As the gold doth ask alloy):
Tears amid thy laughter seen,
Pity mingling with thy joy.
*This is all we ask from thee,
Hermione, Hermione!*

Those Evening Bells

THOMAS MOORE

Those evening bells ! those evening bells.
How many a tale their music tells,
Of youth, and home, and that sweet time
When last I heard their soothing chime!

Those joyous hours are passed away;
And many a heart that once was gay,
Within the tomb now darkly dwells,
And hears no more those evening bells.

And so 'twill be when I am gone —
That tuneful peal will still ring on;
While other bards shall walk these dells,
And sing your praise, sweet evening bells.

The Two Oceans

JOHN STERLING

Two seas, amid the night,
In the moonshine roll and sparkle —
Now spread in the silver light,
Now sadden, and wail, and darkle.

One has a billowy motion,
And from land to land it gleams;
The other is sleep's wide ocean,
And its glimmering waves are dreams.

The one with murmur and roar,
Bears fleets around coast and islet;
The other, without a shore,
Ne'er knew the track of a pilot.

The Wind and Stream

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

A brook came stealing from the ground;
You scarcely saw its silvery gleam
Among the herbs that hung around
The borders of that winding stream,
The pretty stream, the placid stream,
The softly gliding, bashful stream.

A breeze came wandering from the sky,
Light as the whispers of a dream;
He put the o'erhanging grasses by,
And softly stooped to kiss the stream,
The pretty stream, the flattered stream,
The shy, yet unreluctant stream.

The water, as the wind passed o'er,
Shot upward many a glancing beam,
Dimpled and quivered more and more,
And tripped along, a livelier stream,
The flattered stream, the simpering stream,
The fond, delighted, silly stream.

Away the airy wanderer flew
To where the fields with blossoms teem,
To sparkling springs and rivers blue,
And left alone that little stream,

The Wind and Stream

The flattered stream, the cheated stream,
The sad, forsaken, lonely stream.

That careless wind came never back;
He wanders yet the fields, I deem,
But, on its melancholy track,
Complaining went that little stream,
The cheated stream, the hopeless stream,
The ever-murmuring, mourning stream.

The Chambered Nautilus

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their
streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to
dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt un-
sealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway
through,

The Chambered Nautilus

Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew
the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by
thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn !
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn !
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a
voice that sings :—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll !
Leave thy low-vaulted past !
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more
vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unrest-
ing sea !

The Solitary Reaper

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland lass,
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass !
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
Oh, listen ! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chant
So sweetly to reposing bands
Of travelers in some shady haunt
Among Arabian sands :
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In springtime from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings ?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago :
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day

The Solitary Reaper

Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again ?

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending.
I listened till I had my fill ;
And when I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore
Long after it was heard no more.

The Brook

ALFRED TENNYSON

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

The Brook

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

The Brook

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Autumn Woods

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

Ere, in the northern gale,
The summer tresses of the trees are gone,
The woods of Autumn, all around our vale,
Have put their glory on.

The mountains that infold,
In their wide sweep, the colored landscape
round,
Seem groups of giant kings, in purple and
gold
That guard the enchanted ground.

I roam the woods that crown
The upland, where the mingled splendors
glow,
Where the gay company of trees look down
On the green fields below.

My steps are not alone
In these bright walks; the sweet south-west
at play,
Flies, rustling, where the painted leaves are
strown
Along the winding way.

Autumn Woods

And far in heaven, the while,
The sun, that sends that gale to wander here,
Pours out on the fair earth his quiet smile,—
The sweetest of the year.

Where now the solemn shade,
Verdure and gloom where many branches meet;
So grateful, when the noon of summer made
The valleys sick with heat?

Let in through all the trees
Come the strange rays; the forest depths are
bright;
Their sunny-colored foliage, in the breeze,
Twinkles like beams of light.

The rivulet, late unseen,
Where bickering through the shrubs its waters
run,
Shines with the image of its golden screen
And glimmerings of the sun.

But, 'neath yon crimson tree,
Lover to listening maid might breathe his
flame,
Nor mark, within its roseate canopy,
Her blush of maiden shame.

Autumn Woods

Oh, Autumn ! why so soon
Depart the hues that make thy forests glad,
Thy gentle wind and thy fair sunny noon,
And leave thee wild and sad ?

Ah ! 'twere a lot too blest
For ever in thy colored shades to stray;
Amid the kisses of the soft south-west
To rove and dream for aye;

And leave the vain low strife
That makes men mad — the tug for wealth and
power,
The passions and the cares that wither life,
And waste its little hour.

The Destruction of Sennacherib

LORD BYRON

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the
fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and
gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on
the sea,
Where the blue wave rolls nightly on deep
Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is
green,
That host with their banners at sunset were
seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn
hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and
strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on
the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and
chill,

The Destruction of Sennacherib

And their hearts but once heaved, and forever
grew still !

And there lay the steed with his nostril all
wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of
his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the
turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his
mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the
sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the
Lord !

Hymn to the Night

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

I heard the trailing garments of the Night
Sweep through her marble halls!
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
Stoop o'er me from above;
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
The manifold, soft chimes,
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,
Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
My spirit drank repose;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,—
From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before!
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
And they complain no more.

Hymn to the Night

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this
prayer!

Descend with broad winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed-for, the most
fair,
The best-beloved Night!

A Psalm of Life

What the Heart of a Young Man Said to the Psalmist

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
“Life is but an empty dream !”
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real ! Life is earnest !
And the grave is not its goal;
“Dust thou art, to dust returnest,”
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle !
Be a hero in the strife !



WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

A Psalm of Life

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant !
Let the dead Past bury its dead !
Act,—act in the living Present !
Heart within, and God o'erhead !

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate ;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

The Cloud

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
 In their noon-day dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that
 waken
 The sweet birds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
 As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
 And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
 And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,
 Lightning my pilot sits,
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
 It struggles and howls by fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
 This pilot is guiding me,

The Cloud

Lured by the love of the genii that move
 In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
 Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
 The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
 Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
 And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
 When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
 Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
 In the light of its golden wings.
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit
 sea beneath,
 Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
 From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
 As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
 Whom mortals call the moon,

The Cloud

Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn,
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin
roof,

The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on
high,

Are each paved with the moon and
these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and
swim,

When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,

Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.

The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my
chair,

The Cloud

Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist earth was laughing
below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and
shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex
gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from
the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

Robert of Lincoln

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

Merrily swinging on brier and weed,
Near to the nest of his little dame,
Over the mountain-side or mead,
Robert of Lincoln is telling his name:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Snug and safe in this nest of ours,
Hidden among the summer flowers.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln is gayly drest,
Wearing a bright black wedding-coat;
White are his shoulders and white his crest,
Hear him call in his merry note:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Look, what a nice new coat is mine,
Sure there was never a bird so fine.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,
Pretty and quiet, with plain brown wings,
Passing at home a patient life,

Robert of Lincoln

Broods in the grass while her husband sings :

Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,

Spink, spank, spink;

Brood, kind creature; you need not fear

Thieves and robbers while I am here.

Chee, chee, chee.

Modest and shy as a nun is she;

One weak chirp is her only note.

Braggart and prince of braggarts is he,

Pouring boasts from his little throat :

Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,

Spink, spank, spink;

Never was I afraid of man;

Catch me, cowardly knaves, if you can!

Chee, chee, chee.

Six white eggs on a bed of hay,

Flecked with purple, a pretty sight!

There as the mother sits all day,

Robert is singing with all his might:

Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,

Spink, spank, spink;

Nice good wife, that never goes out,

Keeping house while I frolic about.

Chee, chee, chee.

Soon as the little ones chip the shell

Six little mouths are open for food;

Robert of Lincoln

Robert of Lincoln bestirs him well,
Gathering seed for the hungry brood.
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
This new life is likely to be
Hard for a gay young fellow like me.
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln at length is made
Sober with work, and silent with care;
Off is his holiday garment laid,
Half forgotten that merry air:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
Nobody knows but my mate and I
Where our nest and our nestlings lie.
Chee, chee, chee.

Summer wanes; the children are grown;
Fun and frolic no more he knows;
Robert of Lincoln's a humdrum crone;
Off he flies, and we sing as he goes:
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink;
When you can pipe that merry old strain,
Robert of Lincoln, come back again.
Chee, chee, chee.

An Old Played-Out Song

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

It's the curiourest thing in creation,
Whenever I hear that old song,
"Do they Miss Me at Home?" I'm so
bothered,
My life seems as short as 'tis long.—
For ever'thing 'pears like adzackly
It 'peared in the years past and gone.—
When I started out sparkin', at twenty,
And had my first neckercher on.

Though I 'm wrinkelder, older and grayer
Right now than my parents was then,
You strike up that song, "Do They Miss Me?"
And I 'm jest a youngster again.—
I 'm standin' back there in the furries
A-wishin for evening to come,
And a-whisperin' over an' over
Them words, "Do They Miss Me at Home?"

You see, Martha Ellen she sung it
The first time I heerd it; and so,
As she was my very first sweetheart,
It reminds me of her, don't you know,—

An Old Played-Out Song

How her face ust to look, in the twilight,
As I tuck her to spellin'; and she
Kep' a-hummin' that song 'tel I ast her,
Pint-blank, ef she ever missed me.

I can shet my eyes now, as you sing it,
And hear her low answerin' words,
And then the glad chirp of the crickets
As clear as the twitter of birds;
And the dust in the road is like velvet,
And the ragweed, and fennel, and grass
Is as sweet as the scent of the lilies
Of Eden of old, as we pass.

“Do They Miss Me at Home?” Sing it
lower —

And softer — and sweet as the breeze
That powdered our path with the snowy
White bloom of the old locus'-trees.
Let the whippoorwills he'p you to sing it,
And the echoes 'way over the hill,
'Tel the moon bulges out, in a chorus
Of stars, and our voices is still.

But, oh! “They's a chord in the music
That's missed when her voice is away.”
Though I listen from midnight 'tel morning,
And dawn, 'tel the dusk of the day;

An Old Played-Out Song

And I grope through the dark, lookin' up'ards
And on through the heavenly dome,
With my longin' soul singin' and sobbin'
The word, "Do They Miss Me at Home?"

The poem *An Old Played-Out Song* is from the Riley Love Lyrics, copyrighted 1899 by The Bowen-Merrill Co., Indianapolis, U. S. A. Printed by permission of the publishers.

The Lost Leader

ROBERT BROWNING

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat —
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out
silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!
Rags — were they purple, his heart had
been proud.
We that had loved him so, followed him,
honored him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear
accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us, — they watch
from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
— He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!
We shall march prospering, — not through
his presence;
Songs may inspirit us, — not from his lyre;

The Lost Leader

Deeds will be done,— while he boasts his
 quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade
 aspire.
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul
 more,
One task more declined, one more footpath
 untrod,
One more devil's-triumph and sorrow for
 angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult
 to God !
Life's night begins: let him never come back
 to us !
There will be doubt, hesitation, and pain,
Forced praise on our part — the glimmer of
 twilight,
Never glad confident morning again !
Best fight on well, for we taught him — strike
 gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and
 wait us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

NOTE.—In this poem Browning alludes to Wordsworth who in his earlier life had strong liberal tendencies which he afterwards lost.

The Charge of the Light Brigade

ALFRED TENNYSON

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
“Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns,” he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

“Forward, the Light Brigade!”
Was there a man dismay’d?
Not though the soldier knew
Someone had blunder’d:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,

NOTE.—This poem celebrates a famous charge at Balaklava, in the Crimean War, Oct. 25, 1854. It was a useless expenditure of life, but proved the matchless bravery of the British soldiers. Captain Nolan who gave the order was the first to fall.

The Charge of the Light Brigade

Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabers bare,
Flash'd as they turned in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery smoke
Right through the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the saber-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not,
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well

The Charge of the Light Brigade

Came through the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade ?
O the wild charge they made !
All the world wonder'd.
Honor the charge they made !
Honor the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred !

For A' That and A' That

ROBERT BURNS

Is there, for honest poverty,
Wha hangs his head, and a' that !
The coward slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that !
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that !

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden-gray, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show and a' that;
The honest man though e'er sae poor,
Is king of men for a' that!

Ye see yon birkie, ca's a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Though hundreds worship at his word
He's but a coof for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
His ribbon, star, and a' that;
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

For A' That and A' That

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith, he maunna fa' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that;
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may —
As come it will for a' that —
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
When man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brithers be for a' that!



JOHN DRYDEN

Alexander's Feast; or, the Power of Music

JOHN DRYDEN

An Ode in Honor of St. Cecilia's Day.

'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won
By Philip's¹ warlike son:²
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne:
His valiant peers were placed around;
Their brows with roses and with myrtles
bound:
(So should desert in arms be crowned.)
The lovely Thais — by his side,
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave
None but the brave
None but the brave deserves the fair.

1. Philip of Macedon (382-336 B. C.), conqueror of Greece, against whom Demosthenes spoke, was murdered as he was about to set forth for the conquest of Persia.

2. Alexander the Great (356-323 B. C.), the most famous general of ancient times; subdued practically the whole of the then known world. He was dissipated, but a liberal patron of arts and sciences.

Alexander's Feast

CHORUS.

Happy, happy, happy pair !
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

Timotheus, placed on high
Amid the tuneful quire,
With flying fingers touched the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above,
(Such is the power of mighty love.)
A dragon's fiery form belied the god:
Sublime on radiant spires he rode.
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
A present deity, they shout around;
A present deity, the vaulted roofs rebound:
With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS.

With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,

Alexander's Feast

Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus³ then, the sweet musician sung,

Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young:
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpet; beat the drums;
Flushed with a purple grace,
He shows his honest face:

Now give the hautboys breath; he comes! he comes!

Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure;
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

CHORUS.

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,

3. In Grecian mythology, the god of wine and revelry. He is represented as young and beautiful.

Alexander's Feast

Sweet the pleasure;
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Sooth'd with the sound, the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his foes; and thrice
he slew the slain.

The master saw the madness rise;
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And, while he Heaven and Earth defied,
Changed his hand, and check'd his pride.

He chose a mournful muse,
Soft pity to infuse:
He sung Darius⁴ great and good,
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And welt'ring in his blood;
Deserted at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed:

On the bare earth expos'd he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes.
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below;

4. Darius, King of Persia, whose power Alexander overthrew.

Alexander's Feast

And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

CHORUS.

Revolving in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smil'd to see
That love was in the next degree :
'Twas but a kindred sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.

Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he sooth'd his soul to pleasures.
War, he sung, is toil and trouble;
Honor, but an empty bubble;

Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, oh think it worth enjoying.

Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee.
The many rend the air with loud applause;
So Love was crown'd, but Music won the cause.

The prince unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caus'd his care,

Alexander's Feast

And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again;
At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

CHORUS.

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gaz'd on the fair
Who caus'd his care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again;
At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

Now strike the golden lyre again;
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark, the horrid sound
Has raised up his head !
As awaked from the dead,
And amaz'd he stares around.
Revenge ! revenge ! Timotheus cries,
See the furies arise :
See the snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes !

Alexander's Feast

Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand !
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were
slain,
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain :
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods !
The princes applaud with a furious joy;
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to
destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And like another Helen,⁵ fired another Troy.

CHORUS.

And the king seiz'd a flambeau with zeal to
destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And like another Helen, fired another Troy.

5. Helen, fairest of women, was stolen from Greece by Paris, and carried to Troy, of which Priam his father was king. This brought on the famous Trojan war, which is the theme of Virgil's *Æneid* and Homer's *Iliad*.

Alexander's Feast

Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learn'd to blow,
While organs yet were mute;
Timotheus to his breathing flute,
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft
desire.

At last divine Cecilia⁶ came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown
before.

Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown :
He rais'd a mortal to the skies ;
She drew an angel down.

GRAND CHORUS.

At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,

6. St. Cecilia, the patroness of music, said to be the inventor of the organ; suffered martyrdom A. D. 230. Her story is told by Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales*.

Alexander's Feast

And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown
before.

Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown :
He rais'd a mortal to the skies ;
She drew an angel down.

L'Allegro and Il Penseroso

The two poems which follow are closely related, and in order to be fully appreciated must be studied together. They are in Milton's best lyrical style and are finished and polished to the highest degree of excellence. Their parallelism is remarkable and should be traced with exactitude. The form of each, the adaptation of rhythm to sense, and more than all else the elegant diction, leave no criticism on those clear-cut gems of expression which sparkle in almost every line. "Fresh-blown roses wash'd in dew," "dappled dawn," "meadows trim with daisies pied," "arched walks of twilight groves," are a few of the perfect expressions that show how close he was to nature and how sensitive to every variation of her moods. Scores of such phrases fashioned in the very refinement of art startle the reader with their perfection.

"It is impossible to conceive that the mechanism of language can be brought to a more exquisite degree of perfection. These poems differ from others as ottar of roses differs from ordinary rose water—the close-packed essence from the thin diluted mixture. They are, indeed, not so much poems as collections of hints, from each of

L'Allegro and Il Penseroso

which the reader is to make out a poem for himself. Every epithet is a text for a canto."

— *T. B. Macaulay.*

In Italian, L'Allegro means the cheerful man and Il Penseroso the thoughtful, the pensive man. The poems however are not opposed in spirit but one is rather the supplement of the other, and they may be considered as different phases of feeling for the same person, rather than each a complete individual type.

"L'Allegro is a celebration of the social side of life—the view taken of life by one who loves to associate with the kindly race of men while Il Penseroso brings before us the moods and feelings of a grave and serious spirit—of one whose eye looks inward rather than outward." — *Swinton.*

"The tone of each is admirably sustained; the personality of the poet appears in the calm cheerfulness of the one as well as in the tranquil meditateness of the other. His joy is without frivolity; his pensive thoughtfulness without gloom. But no analysis can do justice to the bold yet delicate lines in which these two great lyrics present various aspects of nature—beautiful, sublime, smiling, or terrible. They are inexhaustibly suggestive to the thoughtful reader, and they have been justly pronounced not so much poems as stores of imagery, from which volumes of picturesque description might be drawn. Written in the seclusion of his home in Horton, they

L'Allegro and Il Penseroso

are fancies about mirth and melancholy; they are poems of theory, not of observation. They show us how a man who knew neither mirth nor melancholy would personify them. They are intellectual studies of emotion—not the irrepressible utterances of emotion.” — *T. B. Shaw.*

L'Allegro

JOHN MILTON

Hence, loathèd Melancholy,
Of Cerberus¹ and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian² cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and
sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jeal-
ous wings,
And the night-raven sings:
There, under ebon shades, and low-brow'd
rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian³ desert ever dwell.
But come, thou goddess fair and free,

1. At the entrance to the lower world the Greeks placed Cerberus, a fierce dog with three heads and with the tail of a serpent. He was friendly to spirits entering but hostile to any trying to pass from the realms of Pluto.

2. Styx, one of the rivers that bounded Hades. The gods sealed their oaths by it.

3. The Cimmerian country was the home of the Celts in northern Europe, supposed by the ancients to be a land of eternal mists and darkness. The god of sleep dwelt in a cave near this country.

L'Allegro

In Heaven yclep'd⁴ Euphrosyne,⁵
And by men, heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus,⁶ at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore:
Or whether, as some sager sing,
The frolick wind, that breathes the spring
Zephyr,⁷ with Aurora⁸ playing,
As he met her once a-Maying;
There on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses wash'd in dew,
Fill'd her with thee a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.

Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful jollity,
Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,

4. Yclep'd — Named.

5. Euphrosyne. — One of the three Graces. Spenser describes their office thus:

These three on men all gracious gifts bestow
Which deck the body or adorn the mind,
To make them lovely or well-favored show;
As comely carriage, entertainment kind,
Sweet semblance, friendly offices that bind,
And all the compliments of courtesy;
They teach us how to each degree and kind
We should ourselves demean, to low, to high,
To friends, to foes; which skill men call civility

6. Goddess of love and beauty. The graces were her attendants.

7. Zephyrus was the west wind.

8. Aurora, the beautiful goddess of the dawn.

L'Allegro

Such as hang on Hebe's⁹ cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastick toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unprovèd pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good m'orrow,
Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine:
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft list'ning how the hounds and horn

9. Hebe, daughter of Jupiter and Juno, goddess of youth, and cup-bearer to the gods.

L'Allegro

Cheerly rouse the slumb'ring morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Some time walking, not unseen,
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great sun begins his state,
Robed in flames, and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the plowman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his sithe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.

 Straight mine eye hath caught new pleas-
 ures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures;
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains, on whose barren breast
The lab'ring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide:
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosom'd high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,

L'Allegro

The Cynosure¹⁰ of neighboring eyes.
Hard by, a cottage chimney smoaks
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon¹¹ and Thyrsis, met,
Are at their savoury dinner set
Of herbs, and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tann'd haycock in the mead.
Sometimes with secure delight
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks¹² sound
To many a youth, and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequer'd shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holyday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How faery Mab the junkets ate:

10. A star in the constellation of the Little Bear. A pole star, an object of attraction.

11. Corydon, Thyrsis and Thestylis are shepherd lads, and Phillis a lass in Virgil's pastoral poems.

12. Rebecks are rude fiddles.

L'Allegro

She was pinch'd and pull'd, she sed;
And he, by friar's lantern ¹³ led,
Tells how the drudging goblin swet,
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flae had thresh'd the corn,
That ten day-laborers could not end:
Then lies him down the lubbar fiend,
And, stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lull'd asleep.
Tower'd cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen ¹⁴ oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,

13. The will-o'the wisp, a dancing ball of fire often seen over marshes, was called the friar's lantern.

14. Hymen, god of marriage, represented in primitive plays in the costume Milton mentions.

L'Allegro

And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask,¹⁵ and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's¹⁶ learned sock be on;
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.

And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,¹⁷
Married to immortal verse;
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning;
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus¹⁸ self may heave his head

15. A mask was a play where the characters wore masks—an early form of the drama.

16. Ben Jonson was then alive. This was a delicate compliment to the successful dramatist. The sock was a low-heeled shoe worn by ancient comedians.

17. Sensuous music.

18. Orpheus, the famous musician of Grecian mythology. His wife Eurydice was bitten by a snake and died. Orpheus, grieving at his loss, went to the lower world and by his music charmed Pluto, who consented to the return of the woman, providing Orpheus would not look back till she had reached the upper world. He was unable to keep his promise and she was snatched from him.

L'Allegro

From golden slumber on a bed
Of heap'd Elysian¹⁹ flowers, and hear
Such strains, as would have won the ear
Of Pluto,²⁰ to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.

These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

19. Elysium, the fabled abode of the souls of virtuous mortals, a happy land, not tried by sun, nor cold, nor rain, but filled with flowers and numberless beauties.

20. Pluto, sovereign of the lower world and the shades of the dead. Mortals calling on him beat the ground with their hands and averting their faces, sacrificed black sheep to him.

III Penseroso

JOHN MILTON

Hence, vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,¹
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams;
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus'² train.
But hail, thou goddess, sage and holy,
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's³ sister might beseem,
Or that starr'd Ethiop⁴ queen that strove

1. Bested, are of use.

2. Morpheus, the Greek god of dreams.

3. Memnon, the handsome King of Ethlopie, killed by Achilles in the Trojan War.

4. Cassiopeia, wife of a king of Ethiopia, was changed into the constellation that still bears her name.

III Penseroso

To set her beauty's praise above
The sea-nymphs', and their powers offended:
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-hair'd Vesta,⁵ long of yore,
To solitary Saturn⁶ bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign,
Such mixture was not held a stain:
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's⁷ inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.⁸

Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestick train,
And sable stole of Cyprus lawn,
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait;
And looks commérching with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till

5. Vesta, the goddess of home and the fireside.

6. Saturn, an Italian diety. Dethroned by Jupiter, he fled to Italy, where he ruled during the golden age.

7. The wooded mountains near Troy. Birthplace of Jove.

8. Jove or Jupiter, chief of Grecian deities.

III Penseroso

With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast:
And join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing.
And add to these retirèd Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure:
But first and chiefest with thee bring,
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel⁹ will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of night,
While Cynthia¹⁰ checks her dragon yoke,
Gently o'er the accustom'd oak:
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft, the woods among,
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon

9. The nightingale.

10. Cynthia is the moon; Diana, the huntress.

III Denseroso

Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way;
And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-water'd shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar:
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removed place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom;
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm,
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,¹¹
With thrice-great Hermes,¹² or unsphere
The spirit of Plato,¹³ to unfold

11. A constellation that in this latitude is never below the horizon during the night.

12. Hermes, an ancient Egyptian philosopher. Little is known of him but his almost mythical doctrines.

13. Plato (429-347 B. C.), Greek philosopher, whose works are the grandest record left by the ancients. They compose a system of philosophy as high in its conception as any known.

III Penseroso

What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind, that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook:
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet, or with element.
Sometimes let gorgeous Tragedy
In scepter'd pall¹⁴ come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops line,
Or the tale of Troy divine;¹⁵
Or what, though rare, of later age
Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.¹⁶

But, O sad Virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musæus¹⁷ from his bower !
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes, as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek !
Or call up him¹⁸ that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,

14. In kingly robe.

15. An allusion to the plays of the Greek dramatists.

16. Ennobled by the art of Shakespeare.

17. Musæus, a fabled poet, the son of Orpheus.

18. Chaucer. He left unfinished *The Squire's Tale* in which these characters figure.

III Penseroso

That own'd the virtuous ring and glass;¹⁹
And of the wondrous horse of brass,²⁰
On which the Tartar king did ride:
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung;
Of forests and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.²¹

Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not trick'd and frownc'd as she was wont
With the Attic boy²² to hunt,
But kercheft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute drops from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan²³ loves,

19. The ring enabled her to understand the language of birds and to know the medical value of all herbs. The glass, or mirror, told whether the people on whom she set her affections would prove true or false.

20. A wonderful horse which would in a day transport the rider wherever he wished to go.

21. Spenser in his *Faery Queen* makes his characters represent the virtues.

22. Cephalus, the Greek hunter beloved by Aurora.

23. Sylvan, god of the woods.

III Penseroso

Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe, with heavèd stroke,
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.
There in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honied thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feather'd sleep;
And let some strange mysterious Dream
Wave at his wings in aery stream
Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eyelids laid:
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloysters pale,
And love the high-embowèd roof,
With antick pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light:
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,

III Penseroso

In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.

And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.

These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.



OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

The Cry of the Children

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my
brothers,

Ere the sorrow comes with years ?

They are leaning their young heads against
their mothers,

And *that* cannot stop their tears.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,

The young birds are chirping in the nest,

The young fawns are playing with the shadows,

The young flowers are blowing toward the
west —

But the young, young children, O my brothers,

They are weeping bitterly !

They are weeping in the playtime of the others,

In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the
sorrow ?

Why their tears are falling so ?

The old man may weep for his to-morrow

Which is lost in Long Ago ;

The old tree is leafless in the forest,

The old year is ending in the frost,

The Cry of the Children

The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,
The old hope is hardest to be lost:
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their
mothers,
In our happy fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and
presses
Down the cheeks of infancy;
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary,
Our young feet," they say, "are very weak;
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary —
Our grave-rest is very far to seek:
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the
children,
For the outside earth is cold,
And we young ones stand without, in our
bewildering,
And the graves are for the old."

"True," say the children, "it may happen
That we die before our time:
Little Alice died last year, her grave is shapen
Like a snowball, in the rime.

The Cry of the Children

We looked into the pit prepared to take her:

Was no room for any work in the close clay!
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will
wake her,

Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'
If you listen by that grave in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries;
Could we see her face, be sure we should not
know her,

For the smile has time for growing in her
eyes:

And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud by the kirk-chime.

It is good when it happens," say the children,
"That we die before our time."

Alas, alas, the children! they are seeking

Death in life, as best to have:

They are binding up their hearts away from
breaking,

With a cerement from the grave.

Go out, children, from the mine and from the
city.

Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do;
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips
pretty,

Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them
through!

The Cry of the Children

But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the
meadows

Like our weeds anear the mine?

Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap;

If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.

Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,

We fall upon our faces, trying to go;

And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,

The reddest flower would look as pale as
snow.

For, all day, we drag our burden tiring

Through the coal-dark underground;

Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron

In the factories, round and round.

"For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning;

Their wind comes in our faces,

Till our hearts turn, our heads with pulses
burning,

And the walls turn in their places:

Turns the sky in the high window blank and
reeling,

The Cry of the Children

Turns the long light that drops adown the
wall.

Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day, the iron wheels are droning,
And sometimes we could pray,
'O ye wheels,' (breaking out in a mad moan-
ing)
'Stop! be silent for to-day!' "

Ay, be silent! Let them hear each other
breathing

For a moment, mouth to mouth!
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh
wreathing

Of their tender human youth!
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals:
Let them prove their living souls against the
notion

That they live in you, or under you, O
wheels!

Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
Grinding life down from its mark;
And the children's souls, which God is calling
sunward,
Spin on blindly in the dark.

The Cry of the Children

Now tell the poor young children, O my
brothers,

To look up to Him and pray;
So the blessed One who blesseth all the
others,

Will bless them another day.

They answer, "Who is God that He should
hear us,

While the rushing of the iron wheels is
stirred?

When we sob aloud, the human creatures
near us

Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a
word.

And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their
resounding)

Strangers speaking at the door:

Is it likely God, with angels singing round
Him,

Hears our weeping any more?

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remem-
ber,

And at midnight's hour of harm,

'Our Father,' looking upward in the cham-
ber,

We say softly for a charm.

The Cry of the Children

We know no other words except 'Our
Father,'

And we think that, in some pause of angels'
song,

God may pluck them with the silence sweet
to gather,

And hold both within His right hand which
is strong.

'Our Father!' If he heard us, He would
surely

(For they call Him good and mild)

Answer, smiling down the steep world very
purely,

'Come and rest with me, my child.'

"But, no!" say the children, weeping faster,

"He is speechless as a stone:

And they tell us, of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on."

"Go to!" say the children,—“up in
Heaven,

Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we
find.

Do not mock us; grief has made us unbeliev-
ing:

We look up for God, but tears have made
us blind."

The Cry of the Children

Do you hear the children weeping and dis-
proving,

O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God's possible is taught by His world's
loving,
And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you!
They are weary ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the
glory

Which is brighter than the sun.
They know the grief of man, without its
wisdom;

They sink in man's despair, without its
calm;

Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the
palm:

Are worn as if with age, yet unretrievingly
The harvest of its memories cannot reap,—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.
Let them weep! Let them weep!

They look up with their pale and sunken
faces,
And their look is dread to see,

The Cry of the Children

For they mind you of their angels in high
places,

With eyes turned on Deity.

“How long,” they say, “how long, O cruel
nation,

Will you stand, to move the world, on a
child’s heart,—

Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpi-
tation,

And tread onward to your throne amid the
mart?

Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,

And your purple shows your path!

But the child’s sob in the silence curses
deeper

Than the strong man in his wrath.”

Resignation

To Fausta

MATTHEW ARNOLD

To die be given us, or attain!
Fierce work it were, to do again.
So pilgrims, bound for Mecca, pray'd
At burning noon; so warriors said,
Scarf'd with the cross, who watched the miles
Of dust which wreathed their struggling files
Down Lydian mountains, so, when snows
Round Alpine summits, eddying, rose,
The Goth, bound Rome-ward; so the Hun,
Crouch'd on his saddle, while the sun
Went lurid down o'er flooded plains
Through which the groaning Danube strains
To the drear Euxine; — so pray all,
Whom labours, self-ordain'd enthrall;
Because they to themselves propose
On this side the all-common close
A goal which, gain'd may give repose,
So pray they; and to stand again
Where they stood once, to them were pain;
Pain to tread back and to renew
Past straits, and currents long steer'd through.
But milder natures, and more free —

Resignation

Whom an unblamed serenity
Hath freed from passions, and the state
Of struggle these necessitate;
Whom schooling of the stubborn mind
Hath made, or birth hath found resign'd —
These mourn not, that their goings pay
Obedience to the passing day.
These claim not every laughing Hour
For handmaid to their striding power:
Each in her turn, with torch uprear'd,
To await their march; and when appear'd,
Through the gold gloom, with measured race,
To usher for a destined space
(Her own sweet errands all forgone)
The too imperious traveller on.
These, Fausta, ask not this, nor thou,
Time's chafing prisoner, ask it now !

We left, just ten years since, you say,
That wayside inn we left to-day.
Our jovial host, as forth we fare,
Shouts greeting from his easy chair.
High on a bank our leader stands,
Reviews and ranks his motley bands,
Makes clear our goal to every eye —
The valley's western boundary,
A gate swings to ; our tide hath flow'd
Already from the silent road.

Resignation

The valley pastures, one by one,
Are threaded, quiet in the sun;
And now beyond the rude stone bridge
Slopes gracious up the western ridge.
Its woody border, and the last
Of its dark, upland farms is past —
Cool farms, with open-lying stores,
Under their burnish'd sycamores;
All past! and through the trees we glide,
Emerging on the green hill-side.
There climbing hangs, a far-seen sign,
Our wavering, many-colour'd line;
There winds, upstreaming slowly still
Over the summit of the hill.
And now, in front, behold outspread
Those upper regions we must tread!
Mild hollows, and clear, heathy swells,
The cheerful silence of the fells.
Some two hours' march with serious air,
Through the deep noontide heats we fare;
The red grouse, springing at our sound,
Skims, now and then, the shining ground;
No life, save his and ours, intrudes
Upon these breathless solitudes.
O joy! again the farms appear.
Cool shade is there, and rustic cheer;
There springs the brook will guide us down,
Bright comrade, to the noisy town.

Resignation

Lingering, we follow down, we gain
The town, the highway and the plain.
And many a mile of dusty way,
Parch'd and road-worn, we made that day;
But Fausta, I remember well,
That as the balmy darkness fell
We bathed our hands with speechless glee,
That night, in the wide-glimmering sea.

Once more we tread this self-same road,
Fausta, which ten years since we trod;
Alone we tread it you and I,
Ghosts of that boisterous company.
Here, where the brook shines, near its head,
In its clear, shallow, turf-fringed bed;
Here, whence the eye first sees, far down,
Capp'd with faint smoke, the noisy town;
Here sit we and again unroll,
Though slowly, the familiar whole.
The solemn wastes of heathy hill
Sleep in the July sunshine still;
The self-same shadows now, as then,
Play through this grassy upland glen;
The loose, dark stones on the green way
Lie strewn, it seems, where then they lay;
On this mild bank above the stream
(You crush them !) the blue gentians gleam.
Still this wild brook, the rushes cool,

Resignation

The sailing foam, the shining pool!
These are not changed; and we, you say,
Are scarce more changed, in truth, than they.

The gipsies, whom we met below,
They, too, have long roam'd to and fro;
They ramble, leaving, where they pass,
Their fragments on the cumber'd grass,
And often to some kindly place
Chance guides the migratory race,
Where, though long wanderings intervene,
They recognize a former scene.
The dingy tents are pitch'd; the fires
Give to the wind their wavering spires;
In dark knots crouch round the wild flame
Their children, as when first they came;
They see their shackled beasts again
Move, browsing, up the gray-wall'd lane.
Signs are not wanting, which might raise
The ghost in them of former days —
Signs are not wanting, if they would;
Suggestions to disquietude;
For them, for all, time's busy touch,
While it mends little, troubles much.
Their joints grow stiffer — but the year
Runs his old round of dubious cheer;
Chilly they grow — yet winds in March,
Still, sharp as ever, freeze and parch;

Resignation

They must live still — and yet, God knows,
Crowded and keen the country grows;
It seems as if, in their decay,
The law grew stronger every day.
So might they reason, so compare,
Fausta, times past with times that are.
But no! — they rubb'd through yesterday
In their hereditary way,
And they will rub through, if they can
To-morrow on the self-same plan,
Till death arrive to supersede,
For them, vicissitude and need.

The poet, to whose mighty heart
Heaven doth a quicker pulse impart,
Subdues that energy to scan
Not his own course, but that of man.
Though he move mountains, though his day
Be pass'd on the proud heights of sway,
Though he hath loosed a thousand chains,
Though he hath borne immortal pains,
Action and suffering though he know —
He hath not lived, if he lives so.
He sees in some great historied land,
A ruler of the people stand,
Sees his strong thought in fiery flood
Roll through the heaving multitude,
Exults — yet for no moment's space

Resignation

Envies the all-regarded place.
Beautiful eyes meet his — and he
Bears to admire uncravingly;
They pass — he, mingled with the crowd,
Is in their far-off triumphs proud.
From some high station he looks down,
At sunset, on a populous town;
Surveys each happy group, which fleets,
Toil ended, through the shining streets,
Each with some errand of its own —
And does not say : *I am alone.*
He sees the gentle stir of birth
When morning purifies the earth;
He leans upon a gate and sees
The pastures, and the quiet trees;
Low, woody hill, with gracious bound,
Folds the still valley almost round;
The cuckoo, loud on some high lawn,
Is answer'd from the depth of dawn;
In the hedge straggling to the stream,
Pale, dew-drench'd, half-shut roses gleam;
But, where the farther side slopes down,
He sees the drowsy, new-waked clown
In his white, quaint embroider'd frock
Make, whistling, tow'rd his mist-wreathed
flock —
Slowly, behind his heavy tread,
The wet, flower'd grass heaves up its head.

Resignation

Lean'd on his gate, he gazes — tears
Are in his eyes, and in his ears
The murmur of a thousand years.
Before him he sees life unroll,
A placid and continuous whole —
That general life, which does not cease,
Whose secret is not joy, but peace;
That life, whose dumb wish is not miss'd
If birth proceeds, if things subsist;
The life of plants, and stones, and rain,
The life he craves — if not in vain
Fate gave, what chance shall not control,
His sad lucidity of soul.

You listen — but that wandering smile,
Fausta, betrays you cold the while!
Your eyes pursue the bells of foam
Wash'd, eddying from this bank, their home.
*Those gipsies, so your thoughts I scan,
Are less, the poet more, than man.
They feel not, though they move and see;
Deeper the poet feels; but he
Breathes, when he will, immortal air,
Where Orpheus and where Homer are.
In the day's life, whose iron round
Hems us all in, he is not bound;
He leaves his kind, o'erleaps their pen,
And flees the common life of men,*

Resignation

*He escapes thence but we abide —
Not deep the poet sees, but wide.*

The world in which we live and move
Outlasts aversion, outlasts love,
Outlasts each effort, interest, hope,
Remorse, grief, joy; —and were the scope
Of these affections wider made,
Man still would see, and see dismay'd,
Beyond his passion's widest range,
Far regions of eternal change.
Nay, and since death, which wipes out man,
Finds him with many an unsolved plan,
With much unknown, and much untried,
Wonder not dead, and thirst not dried,
Still gazing on the ever-full
Eternal mundane spectacle —
This world in which we draw our breath,
In some sense, Fausta, outlasts death.
Blame thou not, therefore, him who dares
Judge vain beforehand human cares.
Whose natural insight can discern
What through experience others learn;
Who needs not love and power, to know
Love transient, power an unreal show;
Who treads at ease life's uncheer'd ways —
Him blame not, Fausta, rather praise!
Rather thyself for some aim pray

Resignation

Nobler than this, to fill the day;
Rather that heart, which burns in thee
Ask, not to amuse, but to set free;
Be passionate hopes, not ill resign'd
For quiet, and a fearless mind.
And though fate grudge to thee and me
The poet's rapt security,
Yet they, believe me, who await
No gifts from chance, have conquer'd fate.
They, winning room to see and hear,
And to men's business not too near,
Through clouds of individual strife
Draw homeward to the general life.
Like leaves by suns not yet uncurl'd;
To the wise, foolish; to the world,
Weak;—yet not weak, I might reply,
Not foolish, Fausta, in His eye,
To whom each moment in its race
Crowd as we will its neutral space,
Is but a quiet watershed
Whence, equally, the seas of life and death
are fed.

Enough, we live!—and if a life,
With large results so little rife,
Though bearable, seem hardly worth
This pomp of worlds, this pain of birth;
Yet, Fausta, the mute turf we tread,

Resignation

The solemn hills around us spread,
This stream which falls incessantly,
The strange-scrawl'd rocks, the lonely sky,
If I might lend their life a voice,
Seem to bear rather than rejoice.
And even could the intemperate prayer
Man iterates, while these forbear,
For movement, for an ampler sphere,
Pierce Fate's impenetrable ear;
Not milder is the general lot
Because our spirits have forgot,
In action's dizzying eddy whirl'd,
The something that infects the world.

Commentary

Resignation is somewhat obscure. Hence the following outline of the thought may prove useful :

The keynote of this poem seems to be the thought of resigned acceptance of an existence in which one must be content *to bear rather than rejoice*,—a life in which all human striving for enduring wisdom, power and joy is ultimately vain.

The first stanza presents a contrast between those who so ardently pursue their ambitions that they can not endure the thought of retracing their steps and again going over paths once trodden, and those whom nature, or the discipline of experience, has made willing to accept whatever the

Resignation

passing hour may bring. Then the poet recalls to Fausta, his companion, their journey of ten years before, when, with a great company, they traveled the same road over which they are now passing. After drawing attention to the unchanged aspect of the natural objects along their way, he chooses from a low and from a very high plane of human existence, illustrations of lives lived with remarkable submission to fate. The gypsies wander aimlessly, content with a bare subsistence; the poet, able to view and interpret aright the activities of the world, withdraws himself from the busy strife and regards it from without, contrasting it with the changeless operations of nature, *that general life . . . whose secret is not joy, but peace.*

But Fausta protests that the gypsies are less, the poet more, than ordinary man. To this it is replied that the poet's insight causes him to discern what others must learn through experience, and that it is therefore wise to assume the poet's attitude and *judge vain beforehand human cares.* We may learn from nature to be wisely content to endure; and we may be assured that even could man's fervent desire for the fruition of hopes and endeavors reach *Fate's impenetrable ear*, the prayer could not be answered, nor could it make life more easily borne, for in the strife of the world man has temporarily forgotten the inscrutable *something* that makes all effort to rise to an *ampler sphere* of thought and action unavailing.

A Question

To Fausta

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Joy comes and goes, hope ebbs and flows
Like the wave;
Change doth unknit the tranquil strength of
men.

Love lends life a little grace,
A few sad smiles; and then,
Both are laid in one cold place,
In the grave.

Dreams dawn and fly, friends smile and die
Like spring flowers;
Our vaunted life is one long funeral.
Men dig graves with bitter tears
For their dead hopes; and all,
Mazed with doubts and sick with fears,
Count the hours.

We count the hours! These dreams of ours,
False and hollow,
Do we go hence and find they are not dead?
Joys we dimly apprehend,
Faces that smiled and fled,
Hopes born here, and born to end,
Shall we follow?

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Teaching Reading and Literature



WHITTIER'S AMESBURY HOME

Reading Poetry

Poetry is the highest literary art, and for this reason it has fewest devotees. "I care nothing for poetry. I never read poetry except upon compulsion," are statements we hear nearly every day. This is not the fault of poetry, but it is because of our fancied inability to hear and feel. Poetry contains all the intellectual inspiration of prose, and besides that, it charms the ear with its music and moves the soul with its passion.

As has been shown in previous lessons, many poems are primarily stories, and should be read first as such. No novel ever contained a more charming love story or wrought out its characters in a stronger way than *Enoch Arden*, and none ever showed deeper passion or more thrilling incidents than *Lars*. *Ivanhoe* is not a better story than *The Lady of the Lake*; perhaps the plot is a little harder to get from the latter, but have we not long since learned to value what we possess by the effort which it has cost us?

But other charms than that of plot are to be found in poems. First there is music that comes not from tones merely, but from regularly recurring accents and the harmonious combinations of melodious sounds. It requires a trained reader to hear this silent music; most of us are dependent upon the interpretation of another. So we can

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only learn to get our full allotment of pleasure by reading aloud.

Consider the first stanza in Riley's *Mother Song* :

Mother, O mother ! forever I cry for you,
Sing the old song I may never forget ;
Even in slumber I murmur and sigh for you.
Mother, O Mother,
Sing low, " Little brother,
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet ! "

By reading it aloud, we catch the rhythm of its accents and hear the pleasing rhymes and delight in the succession of smooth, flowing vowels and soft consonants that together give the soothing melody of a lullaby.

But the music we hear is not in every case as sweet and soothing. At times the lines imitate discordant sounds, but then they are in harmony with the ideas expressed, as in these lines from *A Sudden Shower* :

The highway smokes ; sharp echoes ring ;
The cattle bawl and cowbells clank ;
And into town comes galloping
The farmer's horse, with steaming flank.

A stanza that illustrates a still different music is the following, in which the gaiety of the children is imitated in the quickstep of the lines :

Childish voices, further on,
Where the truant stream has gone,
Vex the echoes of the wood
Till no word is understood—
Save that we are well aware
Happiness is hiding there.

Reading Poetry

From another of Riley's poems comes a fourth stanza with a longer swing, a gentler rhythm :

There's the song of the lark when the skies are clear,
And the song of the thrush when the skies are gray.

If all these ideas were expressed in nearly the same words but without an harmonious metrical arrangement, the effect would not be nearly so powerful, there would be no appeal to our feelings.

Reading aloud in such a way as to bring out the accents upon which the music is based is called scanning. If, in scanning, the accented syllables are made too prominent, the ear is offended. The good reader knows just how and where to place the stress. Pupils who read in a "sing-song" tone have recognized the rhythm and have emphasized it to the exclusion of the meaning. They are scanning too forcibly. While such reading is very unpleasant, the cause of it is a musical appreciation that may be turned to good account.

EXERCISE I

ON RHYME AND ALLITERATION

1. THE TEACHER'S PREPARATION. Study those parts of pages 25-27 in Volume IV that relate to rhyme; study the second paragraph on page 28 and all of pages 29 and 30. Remember that the stanza is the unit, and that often the rhyme scheme is not complete until the end of the stanza. The discussion of rhymes in sonnets is to be found on pages 166 and 167 in Volume V. Use an abundance of material in making your studies. It would be worth while to examine the rhymes of all the poems in Volumes V and VI; for with a little practice, it can be done very quickly.

2. ASSIGNMENT TO THE PUPIL. Explain to the class what rhymes are, what their purpose is and what constitutes perfect rhyme. Teach the pupils to recognize imperfect ones as well as to see the difference between single rhymes, double rhymes, rhymes in the middle of lines and at the end. Then show how rhymes are arranged in couplets, alternating, or otherwise. Take the simpler rhyme schemes first, and explain them by illustrations drawn from the poems in the children's readers or from lines written upon the board. Assign certain poems and have the rhyming words

On Rhyme and Alliteration

written in groups and brought to the class. The age of the class will determine how extensively you may go into complicated rhyme schemes.

Ask the pupils to find rhymes which they like and to bring to class lines that rhyme particularly well. Call upon them for original rhymes and rhymed lines. The same method of assignment can be used to advantage in the study of alliteration.

3. RECITATION. Have at hand a supply of poems in which the rhymes are differently arranged, and present them to different members of the class, asking each to select the rhymes which seem most pleasing ; to find, if he can, any that are not really good, and finally to determine the rhyme scheme of the stanza. At the same time all the pupils may look for examples of alliteration.

EXERCISE II

ON RHYTHM AND METER

I. THE TEACHER'S PREPARATION. Read the topic *Meter*, pages 15-22, Volume IV; also the first paragraph on page 28. Study a number of poems very carefully until you are sure you recognize at a glance the prevalent foot. Do not expect to be able to scan perfectly or analyze every verse at first sight; you will find many variations from the regular foot; but these need not be of trouble to you. Sometimes it is necessary to read a stanza or two before you can be really certain of the prevailing foot. Sonnets and blank verse are always iambic. In Volume IV, the following poems are iambic, often varied a little by anapestic feet, and occasionally by the introduction of some other foot:

The Daffodils—page 32.

The Rainy Day—page 37.

Battle Hymn of the Republic—page 42.

The Recessional—page 44.

Auld Lang Syne—page 54.

Beware—page 59.

To the Fringed Gentian—page 121.

The following poems (all from Volume IV) are anapestic or anapestic varied by iambic feet. Occasionally this variation is symmetrical, as for

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instance, when lines regularly begin with an iambic foot and conclude with a series of anapests.

Flow Gently, Sweet Afton—page 64.

Annabel Lee—page 69.

The Lord is My Shepherd—page 88.

The Cry of the Children—page 217.

The trochaic foot forms the strongest contrast with the iambic and is rarely combined with it, but trochees and dactyls fit together very harmoniously. From Volume IV, the following poems illustrate the trochaic foot, though you must always be on the lookout for dactyls :

Footsteps of Angels—page 73.

Softly—page 150.

An excellent example of the contrast between trochees and iambics may be seen in comparing the stanza beginning, *Haste thee, nymph*, in *L'Alle-gro*, page 202, with the stanza beginning, *Come, pensive nun*, from *Il Penseroso*, page 210. The contrast is marked in meter and in sentiment, for the ideas are as strongly opposed as their expression.

As examples of dactylic verse, varied occasionally by trochaic feet, the following poems from Volume IV may be studied :

Boat Song—page 143.

Robert of Lincoln—page 176.

The Lost Leader—page 182.

The Charge of the Light Brigade—page 184.

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As an example of the skill with which several different meters may be combined in the same poem, study *Alexander's Feast*, page 189, Volume IV.

While dactylic and anapestic feet are exactly opposite in the placing of the accent, yet it is possible to make the rhythm of the two seem much alike.

It will be noticed that in some of the poems mentioned are good examples of the amphibrachic foot.

It will be seen, also, that iambic feet are much more numerous, and that more of iambic poems can be found than of all the others put together. This shows which foot should be first explained to the class.

2. ASSIGNMENT AND RECITATION. Be sure that the children understand what accent is and that they can detect accents on the syllables in words of more than two syllables, then that they can detect the accents on different syllables in the line. Show the pupils that where several monosyllables follow one another in a line, the more important ones are naturally emphasized or accented. Do not attempt to explain the structure of the poetic foot until the pupils are able to recognize all the accents that naturally occur in a line. When the lines contain a large number of monosyllabic words, it may be necessary to study two or three lines in order to be certain of the meter.

After the pupils recognize the accents they can

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easily be taught to see that the accents recur regularly and that each accent in a line marks off a certain number of syllables. Then teach the children to find the number of feet in a line and to notice that the lines of any given stanza are of the same length, or arranged in an orderly way. It may be well to require lines to be separated into syllables, the accented syllables to be marked, and heavy vertical lines to be drawn between the feet; then the scansion is completely indicated. From the confusion that is liable to arise with the diacritical marks, it is scarcely worth while to use the technical division into long and short syllables.

Certain carefully selected stanzas and poems should be given for analysis, and then, as more skill is gained, the pupils should be sent to find examples of the different verse. It is not the purpose of these lessons to make the classifications exact and to give skill in naming the classes, but it is the intention to show what rhythm is and how it may be detected. Poetry becomes more interesting as soon as the reader understands the limitations under which the poet worked.

Doubtless it will be possible now with the knowledge the pupils have of both rhyme and meter to ask that short original stanzas be written. Some pupils will be found to have considerable aptitude for this, but others will accomplish nothing.

EXERCISE III

SIMPLE VERSES

Introduction

It is not always easy to decide just how much of the structure of poetry should be taught to small children; yet if they can early be habituated to noticing the striking features of poetry, their interest in that form of literature will be very much increased, and subsequent studies will not seem difficult and unusual. Certainly any one who is old enough to read in the third reader is old enough to distinguish the essential differences between poetry and prose.

The form in which poetry appears on the printed page is an aid to this distinction, and the pupils' attention should early be called to this characteristic. The facts that the lines are all about the same length, and usually shorter than lines of prose; that each line begins with a capital letter, and that the lines are grouped in stanzas, each containing the same number of lines, instead of into paragraphs of unequal length, are the visible differences between poetry and prose. They have very little to do with the real structure of poetry, however. Poetry would be poetry still, even if printed in the same way that prose is printed, but the method of printing is

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pleasing to the eye and assists us in catching the rhythm.

This exercise shows what may be done with a class of small children who have never been taught to see what really constitutes the structural difference between poetry and prose.

Picture Books in Winter¹

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON²

1. Summer fading, winter comes—
Frosty mornings, tingling thumbs,
Window robins, winter rooks,
And the picture story-books.
2. Water now is turned to stone—
Stone that I can walk upon ;
Still we find the flowing brooks,
In the picture story-books.
3. All the pretty things put by,
Wait upon the children's eye,
Sheep and shepherds, trees and crooks,
In the picture story-books.
4. We may see how all things are—
Seas and cities, near and far,

1. This is printed in Baldwin's *School Reading by Grades, Third Year*

2. Consult the Index to these volumes for information concerning Stevenson.

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And the flying fairies' looks,
In the picture story-books.

Outline

I. THE TEACHER'S PREPARATION. a. Words and Phrases. It is assumed, of course, that you will prepare your class to understand the poem in the manner that has been indicated in the *Exercises* in Volumes II and III. Besides many things which it will be pleasant to talk about, you will find a few things which you will have to explain to the pupils. Among them are the following :

“*Window robins.*” Why should Mr. Stevenson call them *window* robins? (Manifestly because they came to the window to be fed. Tell the children that Mr. Stevenson was a Scotchman, and that when he wrote about robins he had in mind a very different bird from our robin redbreast. The robin of Great Britain is smaller, has an olive-green back and a reddish-yellow breast. It is a friendly bird and comes about the house much as our robins do, and the British children love their robin as well as we do our own.)

“*Rooks.*” The rook is an English bird, not an American one. He is rather a big fellow, with bright black plumage, and looks very much like our crow, but he is a more friendly bird, and comes about the house, picking up worms and seeds. Not only are the rooks friendly with people, but

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they live together in large companies in a very friendly manner. A great many different families have their clumsy nests close together in trees or in old towers. The rook is so common in England that he is almost as well known as the English sparrow now is to us.

“*Turn to stone.*” Explain this figure. Is the water really turned to stone? (No, you know better than that. It is not turned to stone, but it becomes very hard ice, so hard that you can walk upon it, and skate upon it. Mr. Stevenson says water turns to stone, to make you feel that it is really very hard ice, and that winter has really come, when the cold is severe, so severe that we are glad to stay in the house and read.)

“*Find the flowing brooks.*” (We do not really find the flowing brooks, but we see pictures of them in the books, and when Mr. Stevenson says we find the brooks in the books, it seems a much stronger way of saying it, and we feel that the pictures must be very good pictures; that we can really see the water flowing in the brooks and, if we listen very hard, we can almost hear the babbling noise as it flows over the pebbles.)

“*Crooks.*” In England, especially in olden times, when there were a great many sheep, they were kept in flocks by the shepherds, who went out with their sheep to the hills in the morning and stayed with them all day, to protect them from wild animals, and at night brought them safely

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home again. The shepherds carried crooks, that is, long sticks upon which they could rest and lean. The ends of these sticks were turned over into a hook, like the top of a cane. These hooks were convenient sometimes in catching the lambs and drawing them back into the flock.

b. Analysis. After you are sure the children understand the meaning of the words and the force of the figures, you will analyze the thought after the manner that has been previously suggested. You will naturally do this by the use of questions. Ask them to tell in their own words what each stanza means. (Put it into prose.)

Out of the first stanza you should get something like this: Summer has faded away and autumn has passed and winter has come. It is a time when the mornings are frosty and our thumbs tingle if we go out into the cold. The robins come to the window for food, and the rooks fly down among the chickens to feed with them. It is just the time when we take our story books down from the shelves and begin to look at the pictures.

The second stanza should yield you something like this: Now is the time when the ice is formed, ice so strong that I can walk upon it; but my tingling thumbs and frosty ears make me wish to come back into the house, where I can open my story books and find beautiful pictures of brooks flowing through woods and by meadows where the flowers look bright in the sunshine.

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When you are asking the children to put into their own words the meaning of the stanza, do not be afraid to let them indulge their imaginations and put in as many words as they like, as many images and as many new thoughts as they like, providing they do not bring in anything that is not in harmony with the pictures Stevenson suggests. Now it is quite probable that the children in the American schools would not look for sheep and shepherds and crooks to so great an extent as the English children would ; that they would want to see different birds and a different kind of pictures. Let them tell about these things. The thought of the poem is that in the winter time we can enjoy from our books almost everything that the summer offers to us out of doors.

The third stanza might be paraphrased as follows : In the story books there are waiting for the children to see, all the pretty things that have been put there by artists. There are sheep feeding on the hillside, with many little lambs gambolling about them. There are shepherds watching the sheep to see that no harm comes to them and that they do not stray too far among the trees, where wolves and other animals abound. Sometimes we see shepherds running after the lambs and carrying them gently in their arms back to the fold, or leading them with the crooks of their long staves.

The paraphrase of the fourth stanza may re-

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semble this: In these wonderful picture story-books we may see everything everywhere. We may almost travel across the seas to distant cities, and American children may see the English children, with their robins and rooks about them, while we look out of the window to see the blue-jays, or perhaps the downy woodpecker working at some suet we have placed out there for him. We can see, too, how the flying fairies look and, if we are attentive, we can read on the printed page about many things that we can not see in the pictures and yet we enjoy them just as well.

2. RHYME. Approach the teaching of rhyme by means of questions, something after the following manner: What is the last word in the first line? What is the last word in the second line? What sounds are there in the word *comes*? (*K-ŭ-m-z.*) What sounds are there in the word *thumbs*? (*Th-ŭ-m-z.*) Speak the two words one after the other. What sound is different? What sounds are alike? Do the words sound alike when you pronounce them together? What is the last word in the third line? What are its sounds? What is the last word in the fourth line? What are its sounds? What sounds are alike in the two words, and what are different? Pronounce the words together.

What is the last word in the first line of the second stanza? What are its sounds? (*S-t-ō-n.*) What is the last word in the next line? What are

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its sounds? (\check{U} - \check{p} - \check{o} - n .) Do the words *stone* and *upon* sound alike? What sounds are alike? Are these two words as near alike as those that paired at the ends of other lines?

In this manner continue through the poem, and when you are through you can tell the pupils that when two words sound very much alike, they are said to *rhyme*. How many rhymes are there in this poem? (Eight.) What rhyme is a poor one? (The first two lines in the second stanza.) Are there any other poor rhymes? (No.) How many good rhymes are there? (Seven.)

3. METER. This is a more difficult subject to present than that of rhyme, and you will necessarily be satisfied if your pupils do not understand it quite as well. Yet you can lead them to see the main points of meter in this, unless they are very immature, in which case so formal a study of meter may well be omitted. Again use questions, like the following: Read the first line. What is the first word? How many syllables has it? Which syllable in this word has the greater force? What is the second word? How many syllables has it? Which syllable in this word has the greater force? What is the third word? How many syllables has it? Which syllable in this word has the greater force? What is the next word? Question the pupils about each line in the first stanza as was indicated for the first line. When you come to the fourth line you will have to point out that of

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the two little words *and* and *the*, of one syllable each, the first one has the accent, which, however, is very light.

Write the first line on the board, indicating the syllables. Ask some pupil to go to the board and place an accent mark after each syllable which has the accent. The line will appear like this :

Sum'mer fad'ing, win'ter comes'—

Ask another pupil to write the second line under the first. Have another pupil put accent marks after the stressed syllables in this line, which will then appear :

Frost'y morn'ings, ting'ling thumbs'.

Treat the third and fourth lines in the same way, and they will appear :

Win'dow rob'ins, win'ter rooks',

And' the pic'ture stor'y-books'.

When the stanza is completed, ask questions like the following : In the first line, what syllables are accented? (The first, third, fifth and seventh.) Which syllables have no accent? (The second, fourth and sixth.) Ask the same questions about the second line ; the third, and the fourth.

Now give information and ask questions as we indicate here : We measure poetry almost as we measure distances. At any rate, we always try to see how many feet long a line is. But in poetry a foot is not composed of twelve inches ; it is composed of one syllable that is accented and

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perhaps one or two not accented. If that is so, what is the first foot in the first line? (Summer.) What is the second foot? (Fading.) What is the third foot? (Winter.) What is the fourth foot? (Comes.)

Ask some one to go to the board and draw a short vertical line after the first foot; a short vertical line after the second foot, and a short vertical line after the third foot. The first line will then look like this :

Sum'mer | fad'ing, | win'ter | comes'—

Ask the same questions about each of the other lines in this stanza, and have the feet marked. Then you can ask a great variety of questions about the feet in the stanza until the children understand what you mean. Such questions as these may answer: How many feet are there in the first line? How many feet are there in the second line? How many feet in the third line? How many feet in the fourth line? (Call their attention to the fact that there are the same number of feet in every line.) What is the first foot in the first line? What is the third foot in the first line? What is the first foot in the fourth line? What is the second foot in the second line?

Now have them read the stanza with a light stress on each accented syllable. This is scansion; but your pupils will make it too prominent to be pleasing. They will see that it is not a good way to read the stanza. Teach them at once

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that they must not emphasize these syllables strongly and make the reading of a "sing-song" nature; they must read to show what the poem means, but they can always listen quietly themselves for these accented syllables. (Technically, the meter of this poem is trochaic tetrameter.)

Do not continue this exercise until it becomes tiresome. As soon as the pupils lose interest, or you find it difficult to make them understand what you are doing, drop the lesson for the day and proceed to something else. You can return to it at another time. Do this at intervals, and after a while they will be interested to measure every new poem that comes to them.

If your pupils are very young, and this seems too difficult work for them, do not try to teach them to recognize the accented syllables and the feet as such, but teach them to catch the rhythm and hear the music. This you can do by reading yourself with a slightly increased accent. Be careful not to give the idea that when they are reading they should bring out the meter. From the very start you should teach pupils to read for the sense. If they read intelligently, the rhythm will take care of itself. The music of good poetry can not be destroyed by intelligent reading.

EXERCISE IV
AN IAMBIC STANZA

My Heart Leaps Up¹

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1. INTRODUCTION. This poem is simple, and in the literary analysis no difficulty should be experienced. The seventh line is one that is often quoted, and it, perhaps, may need a little explanation if the children who read the stanza are young. It means that a man is very much like a child; that whatever peculiarities of body, mind or soul are in a child, will manifest themselves in a stronger degree in a man. In such a sense “the child is father of the man.”

In this exercise we will consider the rhyme and meter only.

2. RHYME. Use the method of questioning as indicated in Section 2 of the preceding *Exercise*. How many lines are there in the stanza? How many short lines? What is the first short line? What is the last word in the first short line? What is the second short line? What is the last word in the second short line? Do these lines rhyme? What is the last word in the first line? Where is the word that rhymes with it? What is

1. This poem is printed on page 139 of this volume.

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the last word in the third line? Where is the word that rhymes with that? Is there another line that rhymes with the third? What is the last word in the eighth line? What is the last word in the ninth line? Do *be* and *piety* rhyme? Can you pronounce *piety* so it will rhyme with *be*? (Yes.) Would you so pronounce it if you were reading the poem? (No.) Should you notice this imperfect rhyme when you are reading the poem? (Yes.) Now write the numbers from one to nine in a column, and after each number place the word at the end of the corresponding line, thus :

- 1 behold
- 2 sky
- 3 began
- 4 man
- 5 old
- 6 die
- 7 man
- 8 be
- 9 piety

3. METER. The questions which develop the meter of the poem of the preceding *Exercise* will develop this. When your poem is written on the blackboard and marked in accordance with your questions, it will appear like this :

- 1. My heart' | leaps up' | when I' | behold'
- 2. A rain'- | bow in' | the sky',
- 3. So was' | it when' | my life' | began' ;



OLD MILL AT AMBLESIDE, ENGLAND

My Heart Leaps Up

4. So is' | it now' | I am' | a man' ;
5. So be' | it when' | I shall' | grow old',
6. Or let' | me die' !
7. The child' | is fa' | ther of' | the man' ;
8. And I' | could wish', | my days' | to be'
9. Bound each' | to each' | by nat' | ural pi'
| ety'.

You will have noticed in the stanza a few instances in which the accent normally does not take the position compelled by the meter. The first of these is in the second line. In reading, we would not emphasize *in*, though in scansion it bears an accent. The same is true of *when* in the third line, *am* in the fourth line, and *of* in the seventh line. There are other instances where the variation is less conspicuous. You will have noted that in the last line the word *natural* must be pronounced in two syllables to make the meter perfect in scansion. In reading, you would pronounce the word *natural* properly.

Contrast the meter of this poem with the meter of the poem in the preceding *Exercise*. Show that while in both poems each foot contains two syllables, in the first poem the accent falls on the first syllable of each foot, and in this the accent falls on the last syllable of every foot. Scan a stanza of the first and a part of this poem so as to show the contrast; then ask the pupils to scan them. Which poem seems to have the livelier rate of motion and which seems the more sedate?

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Which the jollier? (Iambic measure is usually slow and stately, while the trochaic is lively and gay. This poem is iambic tetrameter, but the second line is trimeter, the sixth line dimeter and the ninth line pentameter. Call attention to these variations in the length of lines.) Is there a difference in the sentiment in the poems to correspond with the difference of movement? What effect do the short lines have, and what is the effect of the ingenious scheme of rhyming? (Both tend to break up the monotony of the measure. Iambic verse is slow and monotonous unless some variations are made. It is common to introduce anapestic, trochaic or even dactylic feet into the lines in order to break the monotony of the movement and add to the melody.)

EXERCISE V

A POEM IN DACTYLIC MEASURE

Boat Song¹

SIR WALTER SCOTT

1. METER. Write the first line on the black-board. Ask some pupil to read it. What is the first accented syllable? (Hail.) What is the next? (Chief.) What is the next? (Tri.) The next one? (Van.) Ask some one to place the vertical line before each accented syllable in the line. The line will then appear like this :

Hail' to the | Chief' who in | tri'umph ad | van'ces !

How many feet in this line? (Four.) How many syllables in each foot? (Three in each of the first three feet and but two syllables in the last foot.)

Treat the second line in the same way and discover that the meter is precisely the same except that the last foot consists of one accented syllable only. Discover, also, that the third line is like the first, and that the fourth is like the second.

The fifth line may give you a little trouble. The word *Heaven* must be pronounced as a single

1. This *Boat Song* appears in the longer poem *Lady of the Lake*. The song is printed on page 143 of this volume.

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syllable. Then when the scansion is marked, the meter appears thus :

Hail' to the | Chief' who in | tri'umph ad | van'ces !
Hon'ored and | blest' be the | ev'ergreen | pine' !
Long' may the | tree', in his | ban'ner that | glan'ces,
Flour'ish, the | shel'ter and | grace' of our | line' !
Heaven' send it | hap'py dew,
Earth' lend it | sap' anew,
Gay'ly to | bour'geon, and | broad'ly to | grow',
While' every | High'land glen
Sends' our shout | back' again.
“ Rod'erigh Vich | Al'pine dhu, | ho' ! ie- | roe' ! ”

Discover that the sixth line is like the fifth, but that the word *anew* must be pronounced as though there were no accent on either syllable ; that the seventh is like the second ; that the eighth and ninth are like the fifth, and the tenth is like the second.

You will have to call attention to the pronunciation of some words. In the seventh line the word *bourgeon* is pronounced as two syllables (*bur'jun*). In the eighth line *every* is pronounced *ev'ry*. In the tenth line *Roderigh* is pronounced in scansion *rod'rick* ; *dhu*, *doo*, and *ieroe*, *i-e-ro'*.

This is an excellent example of dactylic tetrameter, [with four lines in dimeter ; the first and third lines end in trochaic feet ; the second, fourth, seventh and tenth in single, accented syllables.

2. RHYME. The following arrangement of terminal words shows the rhyme scheme :

Boat Song

1. advances
2. pine
3. glances
4. line
5. dew
6. anew
7. grow
8. glen
9. again
10. ieroe

You will naturally draw it from your pupils by means of questions. Notice that the rhyme in the first and third lines is double, and call attention to the fact that this rhyme is the trochaic foot. This is an excellent example of variety given both to meter and to rhyme.

Question your pupils about the rhyme scheme of each of the other stanzas. See if it is alike throughout the poem. By this time your study of meter and rhyme should have led your pupils to see that the poet labors under many difficulties which do not surround the writer in prose. It is a difficult matter to select words whose accented syllables will fit into the meter upon which the poet has determined. It is difficult to select words which rhyme perfectly, and if the rhyme is double, the difficulties are increased.

EXERCISE VI
A POEM IN ANAPESTIC MEASURE

The Destruction of Sennacherib¹

LORD BYRON

1. RHYME. The rhymes in this poem are regular, in couplets, and nearly all are perfect. The only peculiarities are the following:

In the last two lines in the first stanza, *sea* is made to rhyme with *Gal'ilee*, and both meter and rhyme require the accent to be placed upon the last syllable of *Galilee*.

The rhyme in the last two lines of the fifth stanza is perfect, but the rhyming words are dissyllables, a thing which has not occurred before in the poem.

The one weak rhyme is in the last two lines of the last stanza, where *sword* is made to rhyme with *Lord*.

2. METER. Sometimes the metrical structure of a poem is not seen so readily in the first stanza as it is in a subsequent one. This is the case with the poem we are considering now. In the second stanza the meter is almost perfectly regular, as there are but two cases of substitution—namely, in the second line and the fourth line, where the first foot is in each case of but two

1. This poem is printed on page 166 of this volume.

The Destruction of Sennacherib

syllables (trochaic), substituted for the regular anapestic feet.

Develop this foot in the meter of the poem in the way suggested in the exercise immediately preceding. When you have marked the scansion of the stanza, it will appear as follows :

1. Like the leaves' | of the for' | est when Sum'- |
mer is green',
2. That host' | with their ban' | ners at sun'- |
set were seen' ;
3. Like the leaves' | of the for' | est when Au'- |
tumn hath blown',
4. That host' | on the mor' | row lay with'- |
ered and strown'.

The meter of the other stanzas of the poem should be studied carefully, for this is a fine example of anapestic measure, and if your pupils once understand this thoroughly they will have no further difficulty with anapests. The following comments point out the metrical peculiarities of the several stanzas :

a. Stanza 1. The word *Assyrian* must be pronounced in three syllables : the first foot is *The Assy.*

b. Stanza 3. In the second line the first foot is an iambic. *Breathed* is pronounced as a single syllable. The word *waxed*, in the third line, is a single syllable.

c. Stanza 4. The first foot of the first line, the

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second line and the third line is, in each case, iambic.

d. Stanza 5. The first foot in the first and fourth lines is iambic. Note that the first foot of the fourth line ends in the middle of a word, *The lan.*

e. Stanza 6. In the second line, note that the word *broke* is used for *broken*. Although this is strictly ungrammatical, yet occasionally poets are permitted to use such a form. Here it is necessary in order that the meter may be correct. Read the line and substitute the word *broken* and see how the meter is ruined. The first foot in the last line is iambic.

Technically, this poem is in anapestic tetrameter, relieved occasionally by the introduction of iambic feet at the beginning of the lines.

3. READING FOR THOUGHT. You must be careful not to give your pupils the impression that scansion has anything to do with thought, except in an indirect way, or that scansion should in any sense take precedence of correct reading. If we take the stanza which we have just been considering and mark by vertical lines the pauses which are made in oral reading, and accent the words and phrases which require emphasis, the stanza will present a very different appearance from that which was given when the scansion was marked. This stanza contrasts the condition of the Assyrians before the "Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast" with their condition after that. The

The Destruction of Sennacherib

contrast is made more forcible by two similes : Before their destruction they were like the leaves of the forest in summer time ; afterward they were like the fallen and withered leaves of autumn. This is the idea that should be brought out vividly in oral reading. Accordingly, *summer*, *sunset* and *green* take a strong emphasis in contrast to *autumn*, *morrow* and *withered and strown*. The phrase *leaves of the forest*, in the first line, requires emphasis, as it is the basis of the figure, and *host*, in the second line, because that is the thing described. *Leaves of the forest* in the third line, and *host* in the fourth line, are repetitions of ideas that have already been made prominent and consequently do not need emphasis. The stanza marked in accordance with emphasis and thought will appear thus :

Like the leaves of the forest | when Summer is
green, |
That host with their banners | at sunset were
seen ; |
Like the leaves of the forest | when Autumn
hath blown, |
That host | on the morrow | lay withered and
strown. |

4. SOURCE OF THE POEM. The basis of this stirring poem of Byron's is the biblical account of the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, his scornful disregard of the prediction

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that the God of the Hebrews would protect His people, and the destruction of the Assyrian army. The story is told in *II Kings*, XVIII and XIX, and the climax, with which this poem deals, is found in *II Kings*, XIX, 35 :

“ And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand : and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.”

Byron assumes that his readers are acquainted with the event which he describes ; and we need to be to understand the poem. We are told, indeed, that it was the Assyrian army that was destroyed ; but no explanation is made of who Sennacherib was, and only the references to *Galilee* and the *glance of the Lord* give us any hint as to who the people were whom the Assyrians went against. The word *Gentile*, also, applied to the Assyrians, might lead us to think that their enemies were Hebrews.

Miscellany

John Greenleaf Whittier

1807-1892

Snowbound is a poem of home — it is the glowing testimony of son and brother to the love and happiness which abounded in the warmth of his childhood's fireside. By the magic of his pen no less wonderful than the supernal powers of the lamp he yearned to possess in his childhood, he has brought the family to our hearts as though we too had shared their joys and their sorrows. His *Barefoot Boy* is a felicitous little poem whose happy lines carry its readers back to boyhood and the farm. His *Songs of Labor* dignify the occupations they celebrate, and his antislavery lyrics had no little effect in accomplishing the abolition of slavery. Other poems are beautiful in expression and filled with the high sentiment that makes the Quaker Poet a favorite with all who love mankind.

His was an uneventful life, made even more quiet and retiring by the poor health which shut him out from many of the activities in which he wished to engage. He never married, and was painfully shy and reticent in company though with the improved health of later years came more of self-confidence and he allowed himself to be brought more before the public. His man-

John Greenleaf Whittier

ners were engaging and he always appeared to advantage, even while conforming strictly to the beliefs of his sect in the constant cut of his coat.

He was not a highly educated man, he traveled but little, was never in Europe, and spoke no language but his own. In consequence of this his poetry is not filled with the scholarly allusions for which Lowell is noted, nor is it so refined and polished as that of Bryant or Longfellow. He demonstrates that lineage and highly cultivated ancestry are not essential to all men in the world of letters. The defects of his early education rarely show, and errors in his verse are so infrequent that they attract little attention. The perfect simplicity of all he wrote is its greatest charm, as though he knew it was not his place to soar, but that his niche was near to the people, in the simple American home.

A permanent and active politician, unswerving in his devotion to his principles, he made his share of enemies in the exciting days of the slavery struggle but he performed his duties as a writer and as a member of the Massachusetts Legislature with such evident conscientiousness that his most active opponent respected and admired his character.

His greatest fame rests upon his leadership in the agitation for the emancipation of the slaves. He was, moreover, the exponent of deep religious feeling and the ardent advocate of love and purity in the home.

Robert Burns

1759-1796

He was born near Ayr, Scotland, in 1759. In the thirty-seven years of his brief life he contributed as much to the wealth of English literature as any other writer has given. His education was pitifully limited by his father's straitened circumstances, and whatever he acquired of fluency and skill in the use of English he picked up for himself from the books he could borrow or obtain in any other way. How his poems came neither you nor I can tell. They grew. They came to him as he stood by the gently flowing Ayr; they found him as he held the handles of his plough or sat at the little deal table in his humble home. If ever a poet was inspired, Burns had that favor. His verse is as universal as art could make it, his sentiment as true as the church could wish it, and his humanity as broad as the schooled reformer could advocate.

His first volume of poems appeared when he was twenty-seven years old and was published to obtain money for his passage to the West Indies where he had agreed to go as an assistant overseer. The book made him famous and brought him friends through whose aid he was enabled to give up his projected and unwelcome journey. Edinburgh received him with open arms and he

Robert Burns

was the welcome guest at all homes of wealth and refinement. Success was his and wealth might have come to him but his erratic genius gave him no peace and he persisted in wild courses that brought him poverty, suffering and disgrace.

He tried farming and made a home for his wife and family, but discontent and neglect brought him to failure and want. After some years of wandering shame, wherein he learned no prudence, but caroused and joined in wild dissipations whenever he was able, he died in abject misery.

His is one of the world's pathetic stories and we are left still to wonder whence came those beautiful poems whose hold upon the hearts of the people, time can never loosen. Besides the ones printed in this course, *Tam O'Shanter*, *The Twa Dogs*, and many of his shorter lyrics are worthy of admiration, but unfortunately there are also many that are tainted by the low associations and evil company that discolored so much of Burns's unhappy life.

“Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord — its various tone,
Each spring — its various bias;
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.”

Edgar Allan Poe

1811-1849

“I distinctly recall his face, with its ample forehead, brilliant eyes, and narrowness of nose and chin; an essentially ideal face, not noble, yet anything but coarse; with the look of oversensitiveness which when uncontrolled may prove more debasing than coarseness. It was a face to rivet one’s attention in any crowd, yet a face that no one would feel safe in loving.” — *Higginson.*

In infancy Edgar Allan Poe was left a destitute orphan. He was taken to the home of a Mr. Allan of Baltimore who tried to give the child a good education and all the advantages that wealth could furnish. He was put to school in England, afterward entered the University of Virginia and later the West Point Military Academy. From both of the latter schools he was expelled in disgrace for his dissolute conduct. Mr. Allan forgave him and tried to establish the reckless young man in some reputable position, but his insane love for drink, his passion for gambling, and his reprehensible actions finally so disgusted his foster-father that Poe was abandoned to his own resources.

It is the pitiful life of an erratic genius — a man in whom two spirits were always contending, an angel and a demon. He undertook many different

Edgar Allan Poe

occupations only to abandon them for his dissipation. As a writer for the magazines he quarreled with most of the managers, and as an editor his great skill and brilliant promise ended in lamentable failure.

Finally his death came as a result of a prolonged debauch in which he wandered through the streets of Baltimore in a dazed and half-insane condition. He was found and taken to a hospital where relatives and friends did what they could for him, but three days later, after hours of alarming delirium, he became quiet, rested a short time and expired.

He was always a favorite with womankind, and the pathetic story of his love for his child wife and his exasperating neglect of her are material for the poet and dramatist. His treatment of other women to whom he was engaged at later intervals was one of egregious neglect and shameful insult.

Such in brief is the wretched career of one who by right of his genius stands second to no other American. As a prose writer he is the equal of Hawthorne whom he much resembles in some traits of his mind and in the melancholy tone of his utterances. As a delineator of the horrible and the grotesque no one has exceeded him. *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, *The Black Cat*, *The Gold Bug*, and *The Manuscript Found in a Bottle*, are some of the most noteworthy of his short stories.

His criticisms were acrimonious, heartless, and

Edgar Allan Poe

not well balanced. Little that he has written of that sort remains as a permanent contribution to our literature. For example he viciously and unjustly attacked Longfellow for plagiarism and condescended merely to patronize Hawthorne, while he ranked above them both several names then locally prominent which have long since been absolutely forgotten.

His poetry, some of it as weird and uncanny as his prose, is marked by a bewitching melody which fascinates every reader who loves the flowing music of measured lines. George E. Woodberry says of him, "Much as he derived nurture from other sources he was the son of Coleridge by the weird touch in his imagination, by the principles of his analytic criticism, and by the speculative bent of his mind." *The Raven, The Bells, Annabel Lee, Ulalume, To Helen, The Haunted Palace, Israfel, and Dream Land*, should be known. *The Philosophy of Composition* is a curious essay in which he undertakes to establish a purely mechanical method in the construction of poetry, illustrating his meaning by the exposition of his method of work on *The Raven*.

The really excellent part of Poe's writing is very small but that is so really excellent that everyone regrets the vagaries of a life that crushed so refined a genius.

"The elfin charm, the exquisite fascination, the eerie beauty of much of Poe's verse is incon-

Edgar Allan Poe

testable. At times it rises above the reach of analysis; there is witchcraft in it, or, it may be, something purer and nobler than witchcraft. God is never wholly without a witness in any soul, and Poe may have confessed God when he little intended or suspected it."

William Cullen Bryant

1794-1878

He was born in a little farming village in western Massachusetts in November, 1794. His father, a doctor, was a judicious parent and, as long as he lived, the trusted friend and counselor of his brilliant son. Both Dr. Bryant and his wife were descendants of the Pilgrims. It is worthy of note that two of our great poets, Bryant and Longfellow, could trace their genealogy back to John and Priscilla Alden.

Bryant was a precocious child, and it is said that he could walk alone when he was a year old and at sixteen months knew all the letters of the alphabet. He entered school before he was four years old and was always noted for his ready scholarship. At ten he began to scribble poetry; and *Thanatopsis*, the poem that more than any other gave him fame, was written when he was but sixteen. He made no effort to attract attention though he ardently desired to become famous as a poet. *Thanatopsis* lay concealed in his desk for five years till his father found it by accident, took it to Boston and showed it to prominent literary men of the time. They were unanimous in their praise and the reception with which the poem met justified their good opinion.

William Cullen Bryant

He was for a time a student in Williams College but, becoming dissatisfied, secured an honorable dismissal and hoped to enter Yale. This he was unable to do because of his father's pecuniary position, and so for a year he studied at his home. While by so doing he missed some of the advantages of college life, yet his energy and perseverance were such that he gained a vigor of scholarship and a self-reliance not to be otherwise obtained.

He took up the law as a profession and for seven years followed it at several places and with indifferent success. Then he began to work at literature and wrote reviews and poetry for different periodicals, moving in the meantime to New York where in 1829 he became editor of the New York *Evening Post* and entered upon the career of journalism in which he remained the greater part of his life. It was a long and successful career, and he had the pleasure of seeing his own influence bear fruit in the perfection of many of the reforms he ardently advocated. Although he was a Jeffersonian Democrat, he was an ardent anti-slavery writer and his paper never hesitated to champion the cause of the down-trodden.

He was seized with a sudden illness when entering the house of a friend after he had delivered a public address. Five days after this attack he died at the age of 84 years. His long life had made him many friends and they united often in testifying their love and admiration for

William Cullen Bryant

him. Though he never held public office he was much admired and sought for by public men. His influence as a journalist was considerable in modifying and changing the opinions of the nation, but it is principally as a poet that the world will remember him.

His friend for years, an associate with him on the *Evening Post*, his executor and biographer, John Biglow, says of him: "Of Bryant's rank and merits as a poet there is, and for some time to come is likely to be, a great diversity of opinion. A partial explanation of this may be found in the fact that the most enduring qualities of his verse are readily appreciated by only a comparatively restricted class even of those who read poetry. He was essentially an ethical poet. His inspiration was always from above. In the flower, in the stream, in the tempest, in the rainbow, in the snow, in everything about him, nature was always telling him something new of the goodness of God and framing excuses for the frail and erring. . . . Every one of his verses will bear the supreme test of a work of literary art, which discloses a wider horizon and new merits at each successive perusal."

A comparison between *Thanatopsis* and *The Flood of Years* is interesting as it shows in such striking contrast the views of the boy and the aged man. The former sees death as the inevitable end, the fate of every person, and draws from this

William Cullen Bryant

necessity the doctrine of resignation and a life of virtue so that there may be no regret when one "wraps the drapery of his couch about him;" the latter has death as much in view but sees beyond it a peace and quiet such as this life knows not, and throws out a hope of reunion with the loved ones who have gone before. The *Forest Hymn* is a noble song; *Lines to a Waterfowl* is one of the most perfect lyrics in the language; *To a Fringed Gentian* is an exquisite bit of poetry; *Robert of Lincoln* has caught and imprisoned the very song of the bird. *Sella* and *The Children of the Snow* are longer poems abounding in beautiful imagery and charming thoughts.

Bryant has been criticised as being cold, as lacking heart and feeling, and a reader will miss the abounding love and gracious feeling that Longfellow shows, but at the same time will recognize the pure and eloquent voice of nature's chief interpreter. The birds and the flowers have in Bryant their one most appreciative admirer and the one who is best calculated to sing the message they bring from the divine.

Bancroft the historian, at the dinner given by the Century Club on Bryant's seventieth birthday, greeted the poet in these words: "Our tribute to you is to the poet, but we could not have paid it had we not revered you as a man. Your blameless life is a continuous record of patriotism and integrity, and passing untouched through the fiery con-

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flicts that grow out of the ambition of others, you have, as all agree, preserved a perfect consistency with yourself, and an unswerving, unselfish fidelity to your convictions."

A poem by Rev. H. N. Powers contains these appreciative stanzas :

Earth's face is dearer for thy gaze,
The fields that thou hast traveled o'er
Are fuller blossomed, and the ways
Of toil more pleasant than before.

The April pastures breathe more sweet,
The brooks in deeper musings glide,
Old woodlands grander hymns repeat,
And holier seems the Autumn-tide.

More meekly pleads each flowret's eye,
On gentler errands comes the snow,
And birds write on the evening sky
More gracious lessons as they go.

The clouds, the stars, the sea, the grave,
Wide prairie wastes and crowded marts,
All that is fair, and good, and brave,
In peaceful homes and generous hearts,

Through thee their wondrous meanings tell,
And as men go to work and pray
Feeling thy song's persuasive spell
Love's face seems closer o'er their way.

William Cullen Bryant

Two stanzas from Lowell's poem show his appreciation for the senior poet :

The voices of the hills did him obey;
The torrents flashed and tumbled in his song;
He brought our native fields from far away,
Or set us mid the innumerable throng
Of dateless woods, or where we heard the calm
Old homestead's evening psalm.

But now he sang of faith to things unseen,
Of Freedom's birthright given to us in trust,
And words of doughty cheer he spoke between,
That made all earthly fortune seem as dust,
Matched with that duty, old as time and new,
Of being brave and true.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

1809-1894

A distinguished professor in Harvard College, a physician whose essays on scientific subjects have given him an international reputation, the author of several delightful novels, the wittiest and one of the wisest of American essayists, and a poet who has amused and inspired the people of two hemispheres—that is Dr. Holmes.

Elsie Venner is a weird novel in which the inherited tendencies of the heroine lead her to crime; *The Guardian Angel* is a delightful story. *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, *The Professor at the Breakfast Table*, and *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* are three volumes of essays originally published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the magazine which Holmes named and to which he was one of the most prominent contributors. The essays are delightfully chatty, treating of almost every conceivable subject in the course of the morning talks among the boarders at the table. A slight thread of continuity extends through each volume and the characters come to have a distinct personality as one reads on, but the chief charm rests in the witty discussions, the wise reflections and the gracious sentiment of the chief person, Dr. Holmes himself, the Autocrat, the Poet, the Professor.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Old Ironsides, written when Holmes was twenty-one, is a patriotic poem which saved from destruction the frigate Constitution. *The Chambered Nautilus* is a beautiful lyric and one of the best-known of his poems. *The Deacon's Masterpiece* and in a certain sense its sequel *How the Old Horse Won the Bet*, are two highly amusing poems which everybody will enjoy. Some of his best-known poems were written for the class of 1829 in which he graduated from Harvard College. This class contained several men who afterwards became noted, and among them was S. F. Smith, the author of *America*.

Holmes spent some years abroad studying and working principally in the hospitals of London and Paris, and practiced medicine successfully in Boston. He married and one of his sons distinguished himself in the Civil War. Holmes has described his own interest in this son in his article *My Hunt After the Captain*.

In his *Fable for Critics* Lowell characterizes the *Autocrat* in the following humorous vein:

“There’s Holmes, who is matchless among you
for wit;

A Leyden-jar always full-charged, from which flit
The electrical tingles of hit after hit;

In long poems ’tis painful sometimes, and invites
A thought of the way the new Telegraph writes,
Which pricks down its little sharp sentences
spitefully

Oliver Wendell Holmes

As if you got more than you'd title to rightfully,
And you find yourself hoping its wild father
 Lightning
Would flame in for a second and give you a
 frightning.

He has a perfect sway of what I call sham meter,
But many admire it, the English pentameter.

* * * * * * * * * *

His are just the fine hands, too, to weave you a
 lyric,
Full of fancy, fun, feeling, or spiced with satiric
In a measure so kindly, you doubt if the toes
That are trodden upon are your own or your
 foes'. ”

John Lothrop Motley said of him, “ He is beyond question one of the most original writers in English literature, and I have no doubt his fame will go on increasing every day. I hardly know an author in any language to be paralleled with him for profound and suggestive thought, glittering wit, vivid imagination, and individuality of humor. ”

Holmes died in 1894, retaining to the last his genial spirit and ready wit. Few men have done so much to make cheerful the lives of their friends.

John Dryden

1631-1700

Placed in the midst of a profligate people who rated vice above virtue and whose chief amusements were of questionable propriety, a Milton rises above his surroundings and stands a lasting rebuke to his age. Not so John Dryden. To him a livelihood was of far greater consequence than the purity of his writings, and he prostituted his genius to pander to the debased court of his royal protector. A frequenter of Will's Coffee House with Addison, he had little of the sterling character of the great essayist, but passed into a desolate old age, dependent upon the meager earnings of his pen for daily bread. He grew corpulent in body and unpleasant in manner and the unhappy life he had led failed to create the sympathy his years demanded.

He wrote voluminously but most of his work is not readable. Still he stands high in the second rank of English poets and contributed a few noble things to our literature. He was a sharp critic and his caustic words did much to reform the style of writing then in vogue. He wrote many dramas, now considered unfit for publication but sparkling in wit and abounding in stirring incident. Scattered everywhere are gems of thought and keen sentences that are often quoted:

John Dryden

“Forgiveness to the injured does belong;
But they ne’er pardon who have done the wrong.”

“Few know the use of life before ’tis past.”

“Beware the fury of a patient man.”

“Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow;
He who would search for pearls, must dive below.”

“Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bonds divide.”

“None but the brave deserves the fair.”

“War, he sung, is toil and trouble;
Honor, but an empty bubble.”

“Sweet is pleasure after pain.”

“For friendship, of itself a holy tie,
Is made more sacred by adversity.”

He paid a tribute to Milton in a few lines almost universally known:

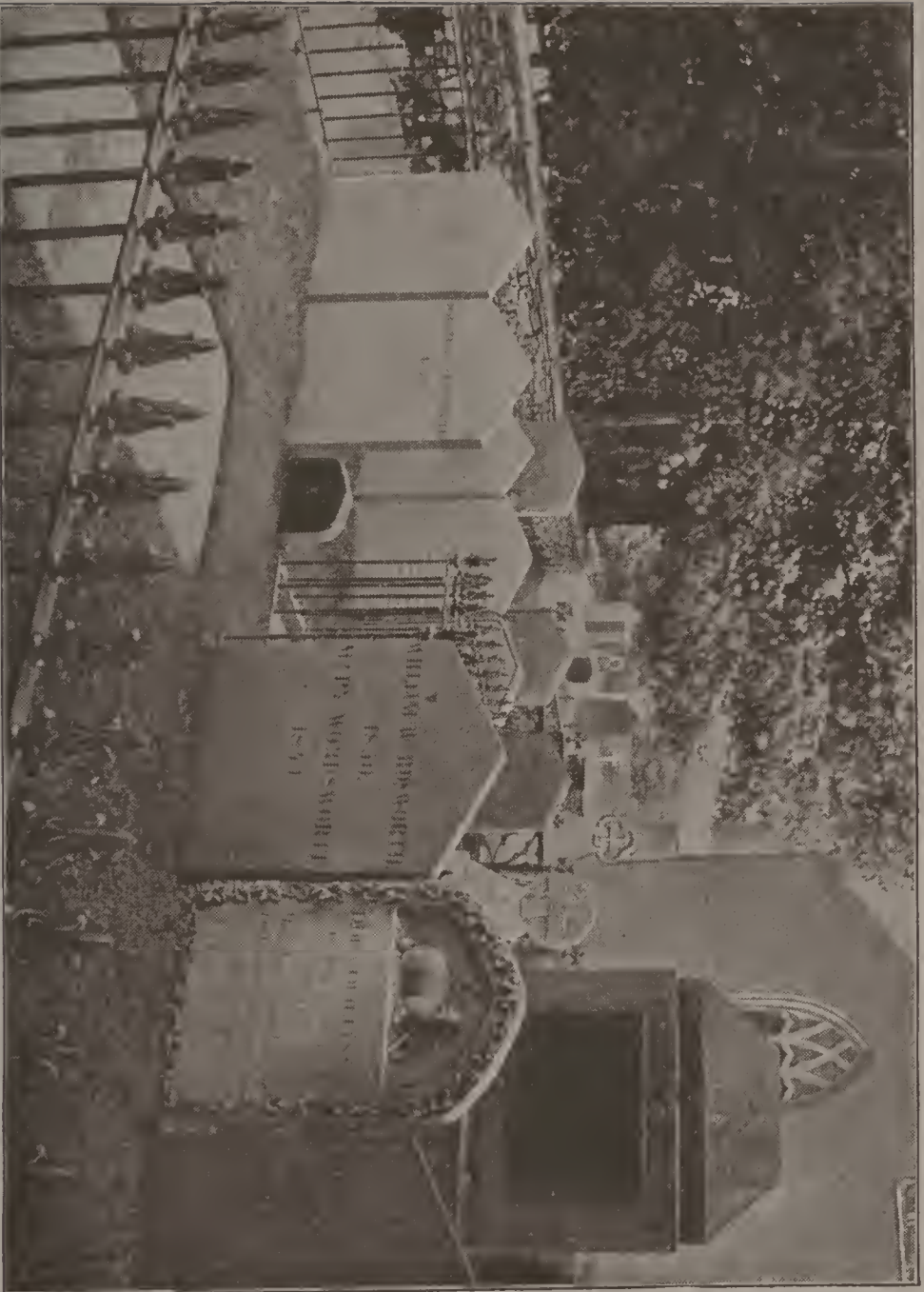
“Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy and England did adorn:
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed,
The next in majesty, in *both* the last.
The force of Nature could no further go —
To make a third she joined the other two.”

That Milton ranks with Homer and Virgil becomes evident from a comparative study of their great epics.

John Dryden

The Ode for St. Cecilia's Day written four years before his death, is Dryden's crowning lyric. The following account is given of its composition: "Mr. St. John, afterward Lord Bolingbroke, happening to pay a morning visit to Dryden, whom he always respected, found him in an unusual agitation of spirits, even to a trembling. On inquiring the cause, 'I have been up all night,' replied the old bard. 'My musical friends made me promise to write them an ode for their feast of St. Cecilia. I have been so struck with the subject that occurred to me, that I could not leave it till I had completed it; here it is, finished at one sitting,' and immediately he showed him this ode, which places British lyric poetry above that of any other nation."

Dryden died in 1700 at the age of seventy-nine, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.



WORDSWORTH'S TOMB AT GRASMERE

William Wordsworth

1770-1850

“Whatever the world may think of me, or my poetry is now of little consequence; but one thing is a comfort of my old age, that none of my works written since the days of my early youth, contains a line which I would wish to blot out because it panders to the baser passions of our nature. This is a comfort to me; I can do no mischief by my works when I am gone.” And this quotation from the man himself describes one of the best characteristics of his poetry. None of his verse is defiled by moral allusion or suggestiveness, and only pure thoughts and the beauties of nature are set forth.

James Russell Lowell classes Wordsworth as the “fifth in succession of the great English poets.” Stopford A. Brooke calls him the greatest English poet of this century. But his actual rank is not of so much importance as the influence he held over modern poesy.

With Pope as the chief exponent of the classic spirit, English poetry had come to be as artificial as anything created by man. Its rules were as arbitrary and as rigidly observed as the rules for constructing a house. Form and manner were everything, and it described the glitter of court and city rather than the beauties of the country. It had a language all its own, a language that was

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above common prose use and adapted to poetry alone. Pope polished his stanzas with unremitting zeal, weighed and balanced each expression, and changed and modified his phrases until even the thought was sometimes lost in the final revision. But this formalism did not entirely destroy the spirit, for Dryden's *Odes*, Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, and some of Pope's own work are as truly poetry as anything that has been written. Still the process of refinement had gone so far that the spiritual element was in danger of being lost to the race that had produced a Chaucer and a Shakespeare.

It was from Burns that the first words of revolt came, and his beautiful lyrics, straight from the soul and breathing the atmosphere of the fields and the powerful spirit of Northern liberty, were the inspiration that caused another school of poets to throw aside the trammels of classical form and make for themselves a way back to nature and the human heart. Cowper, too, had escaped in part from the restraint of Pope's arbitrament but the chief among those who chafed at the restraint was William Wordsworth, whose early life among the commonplace people of provincial England had fitted him to understand and interpret the lessons nature has for man. His father, a lawyer, and his mother, a kindly, helpful person, died when Wordsworth was a boy but they left him not wholly unprovided for and his early schooling

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was as good as the times afforded. Best teachers of all were the woods and the fields, the flowers and the birds and the natural sympathetic human beings who inhabited the little town where, as Lowell says, "everybody knew everybody, and everybody's father had known everybody's father." Here "the interest of man in man was not likely to become a matter of cold hearsay and distant report. When death knocked at any door in the hamlet, there was an echo from every fireside, and a wedding dropt white flowers at every threshold. There was not a grave in the churchyard but had its story; not a crag or glen or aged tree untouched with some ideal hue of legend."

College, travel, a timely legacy "which made it honest for him to write poems that will never die, instead of theatrical critiques as ephemeral as play bills, or leaders that led only to oblivion," friendship with Coleridge and Lamb, quiet retirement in the beautiful Lake Region of Westmoreland, these are the chief facts in a life that was uneventful even for a man of letters. His visit to France and his forced attention to the terrible national upheaval which culminated in the French Revolution, his friendship with Coleridge and the inspiration and direct assistance he received from that weird genius, these seem the two most powerful factors in the development of his spiritual insight and poetic mastery.

Wordsworth like many another inspired singer

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seemed to be driven by overpowering fates into the domain where he was best calculated to rule. He failed as a dramatist and was enabled by the legacy to give up his labors on the newspapers. The critics sneered at him and attacked him so violently that in self defense he was compelled to assume the pen and in irreproachable prose defend himself and formulate the rules that have been guiding principles to every aspiring genius who has since that time felt the invitation of the muses. Coleridge encouraged, guided and inspired him, while Lamb admired and stimulated him to greater exertions. Then an appreciative political friend secured his appointment to a sinecure among the county offices where the salary was sufficiently large to support the incumbent in comfort and the duties light enough to be performed successfully by an inexpensive assistant.

Still it is not just to think of Wordsworth as the child of circumstances. He was far from being at the beck and call of every one who hailed him in the passing. When his volume of *Lyrical Ballads* was published, it was considered a failure although it contained Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*; but Wordsworth was unmoved. Of this particular time Lowell very happily says: "Parnassus has two peaks; the one where improvising poets cluster; the other where the singer of deep secrets sits alone,—a peak veiled sometimes from the whole morning of a generation by earth-born

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mists and smoke of kitchen fires, only to glow the more consciously at sunset, and after nightfall to crown itself with imperishable stars. Wordsworth had that trust which in the man of genius is sublime, and in the man of talent is insufferable. It mattered not to him though all the reviewers had been a chorus of laughter or a conspiracy of silence behind him. He quietly went over to Germany to write more Lyrical Ballads."

He settled in the lake country in 1799 and from that time on this region was his home though it was not till 1813 that he bought Rydal Mount, the place in which he passed the remainder of his life. In 1843 he was elected poet laureate as a well-deserved honor and with the understanding that he was not under obligation to write. He lived until 1850 and then passed away on the anniversary of Shakespeare's death, the 23d of April. He lived to see his own fame rise superior to the criticisms of the reviewers, to know himself famous and deservedly so, to know that he had been the chief factor in the revolution in modern poesy. He had brought it back to nature.

It is not everyone who will admire any of the poetry of Wordsworth; there are none to care for all that he has written. Some of his work is heavy and dull, some childish enough to provoke a smile. His interest is so strong in the commonplace, he is so sublimely unconscious of the lack of that interest in others that occasionally he

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proses till he is wearisome. He is thoroughly philosophical and meditative. Only rarely do things interest him as things. It is their bearing on the problems of life, their indications of a possible future life, their tangible clue to the mysteries of the labyrinth through which we are traveling that fascinates him. Close as are his observations of nature he rarely describes objects or phenomena, he is content to draw his lesson and pass on. With the instinct of a seer he caught the lesson always, and regardless of niceties of diction he published his meditations to the world. If they came from his heart and spoke to the hearts of his readers his purpose was accomplished.

In his famous preface to *Lyrical Ballads* published in 1800, he lays down in prose that in itself is a model, the principles that governed his composition. From that preface the following selections give the gist of his ideas:

“The principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain coloring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, primary laws of our nature: chiefly,

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as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are under less restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of Nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings is a more permanent, and a far

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more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted by poets, who think that they are conferring honor upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.

“The language of prose may yet be well adapted to poetry; and it was previously asserted that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good prose. We will go further. It may be safely affirmed that there neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition. We are fond of tracing the resemblance between poetry and painting, and, accordingly, we call them sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred, and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in a degree; poetry sheds no tears ‘such as angels weep,’ but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.”

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Taine says: "In deep calm he listens to his own thoughts; the peace was so great within him and around him, that he could perceive the imperceptible. 'To me, the meanest flower that blows, can give thoughts that often lie too deep for tears.' He saw a grandeur, a beauty, in the trivial events which weave the woof of our most commonplace days. He needed not, for the sake of emotion, either splendid sights or unusual actions. The dazzling glare of the lamps, the pomp of the theater, would have shocked him; his eyes were too delicate, accustomed to sweet and uniform tints. He was a poet of the twilight. Moral existence in commonplace existence, such was his object—the object of his preference. His paintings are cameos with a gray ground, which have a meaning; designedly he suppresses all which might please the senses in order to speak solely to the heart."

Review Questions

1. Compare Poe and Burns in respect to (a) early education, (b) character, (c) mastery of meter and form, (d) poetic sentiment.
2. Study the meter and the rhyme scheme of *The Chambered Nautilus*. What variations from the established meter can you discover?
3. Compare *L'Allegro* with *Il Penseroso* stanza by stanza, in rhyme and meter. Write in your own words a brief paraphrase of the thought in the two poems.
4. Select from this volume the short poem which you best like, and analyze its rhyme, its meter, its thought, and its claims to beauty. Determine if you can the secret of your preference.
5. Can you find in Burke's oration any passages which seem to have poetic merit? Does he ever use an inverted order in his sentences to make them rhythmical and sonorous?
6. In the lyrics of this volume do you find that figures of speech are abundant?
7. Compare the selections from Scott with those from Bryant, endeavoring to determine which figure of speech is the favored of each writer and to what source each writer goes most frequently for the illustrations he uses and the allusions he makes.

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